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Applied Psycho-Analysis in the Director-Actor Relationship

by

John D. Mitchell, Ed.D.

The [the director] never forgets that the material of his art [the actor] is the most delicate, most perishable, most temperamental, most sensitive, most complicated mechanism in the world: *a human being.* (1)

Great artists often work intuitively, and an examination of the few who have attempted to explain their approach to art reveals that, in most cases, they fail to state clearly their methodology. At best they end up with a *description* of how they work. What is lacking is an *analysis* of how they work. This does not negate the works of art which they have achieved; they stand as monuments to their intuitive genius, and they highlight the need for analyses, not descriptions, of the art process.

In looking over the statements in print of theatrical directors on their methods of directing and rehearsing a play, one finds descriptions of how they work with actors. The approach, as set down, is largely mechanical. Alexander Dean's *Fundamentals of Play Directing* gives in detail sets of rules for picturization, acting techniques, production procedures, etc. It is an admirable book, as far as it goes, but what is lacking is an analysis of the relationship between director and actor.

I am of the opinion that Mr. Dean was not unaware

1. B. E. Zakhava, "Principles of Directing", *Theatre Workshop*, I, April-July, 1937, p. 20.

of the very great importance of the relationship between director and actor, and the climate in which both work toward a common goal. Having been taught directing by former pupils of his, and having talked with actors who worked under him as a director, I think there is sound basis for an assumption that he was, at all times, aware of the psychological factors at work in the rehearsing of a play. Perhaps, lacking the background in the science which provides psychological insights and the tools for analysis, he chose to forego an attempt at the exposition of the subtle relationships between director and actor.

Clearly there is a need for an analysis of rehearsals of a play. It is a creative process involving human beings; in contrast to most other art forms, it is a group activity; at all times there is an interdependence of actor with actor, and actors with director.

It has been said that it is possible to travel by different roads and to arrive at the same destination. "Nobody will expect that the road traveled should always be the same. It is in each case individually differentiated. . . . The psychologist wants to make an inquiry into hidden mental processes in order to arrive at new psychological insights." (2) I have selected three great directors who have set forth in writing something of their approach to rehearsing a play. They are basically practical statements, but as practical methods for working with the actor I see in them something of one or more of three psychological principles formulated by Sigmund Freud. It is a daring attempt, and one that is at all times open to question, to correlate what is meant by a George Bernard Shaw, a Constantin Stanislavsky, a Jean-Louis Barrault with Freud's principles of *transference*, *resistance*, *pleasure principle* and *reality principle*. In some cases, which the comparison may bring out is merely that these three great artist-directors, working intuitively, anticipated a need for further clarification and guidance which

2. Theodor Reik, *Listening with the Third Ear*, (New York: Farrar, Straus and Company, 1949), p. 398.

psychological principles may bring to the art of rehearsal. I find it significant that, out of his later years before his death, Stanislavsky had this to say:

"At first I used to say that the director is a match-maker who brings together the author and the theatre, and who, in a successful production, brings happiness to both one and the other. Later I used to say that the director is a mid-wife who helps to bring into the world a production, a new work of art . . . But now I think that the role of the director becomes much more complex." (3)

The achievements in the art of theatre by Shaw, Stanislavsky, Barrault, as directors, are established facts. It does not seem possible to me that they could have succeeded in their work with actors, as they did, by means of a wholly mechanical approach to the rehearsal of a play. Throughout their writings on the art of the theatre there is the recognition of the actor as a human being. At no time do they relegate the actor to the status of a puppet. This provides one with a basis for examining human behavior and human relationships as they affect rehearsal in the theatre. Human behavior and human relationships are indeed the science of psychology.

No great director, to my knowledge, has written exhaustively on the subject of the rehearsal of a play; moreover, artists like educators are sometimes prone to theorize on their work, and evidence later proves that there has been little relationship between their theories and their functioning. For this reason I have chosen George Bernard Shaw, Constantin Stanislavsky, and Jean-Louis Barrault. In the case of Shaw, I have had the good fortune to talk at length with two actors who had worked under him as director. The distinguished English actor, Ernest Thesiger, bears witness that Shaw, as director, did practise what he preached. From Norris Houghton's book and from conversations with its author, I feel the same may be said for the Russian director,

3. I. Gorchakoy, *Rezisserskie uroki K.S. Stanislavskogo*, (Moscow: Iskosstvo, 1950), p. 26.

Stanislavsky. (4) I have seen the work of M. Barrault, and the actors who have worked under him confirm what he has said in print concerning his relationships with actors during rehearsal.

This attempt to apply, to the art of rehearsal, three principles out of the theory of psychoanalysis, as evolved by Sigmund Freud, is but a most modest beginning. Much more can and should be done with psychoanalytic insights as tools in the area of theatre. "Every year the belief, or superstition, gains ground that psychoanalysis is of purely medical interest—a mode of psycho-therapy to be employed in the interests of the sick. Against this belief I think we ought to wage intensive war, in speech and in writing, for should it prevail—and, unfortunately, many support this belief in their teaching—the world would be robbed of the most valuable of all the benefits of Freud's work. The study of the unconscious is the concern of mankind in general." (5)

A deeper insight into the nature of the art and the utilization of the findings of psychoanalysis are not deleterious to art, rather they contain in them the potential for enhancing art and raising it to loftier heights. (6)

My *craveat* is that these psychological principles must not be used by anyone who lacks a thorough grounding in psychoanalysis; these are insights and disciplines which first must have been experienced by one who would use them. This is not intended as a denigration of their value or their validity; all tools for education have implicit within them great power; we have recognized the need for careful preparation of the teacher before we entrust him with a classroom of students. It is my conviction that the day will come when greater training in psychology will be deemed essential to

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4. Norris Houghton, *Moscow Rehearsals*. (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1936).
 5. George Groddeck, *Exploring the Unconscious*, (London; Vision Press Ltd., 1950) P. 132
 6. Ernest Jones, *Hamlet and Oedipus*, (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1949), p. 14.

the background of those who wish to direct.

I am prompted to add that, in view of my high regard for the art of the theatre and my awareness of the dynamism inherent in art experience, I should like to see both the theatre, as art, and the young people who come to the theatre for art experiences, protected from the incompetent and the inadequately prepared teacher, posing as director.

This attempt at an analysis of the art of rehearsal of a play, and the relationship between director and actors, will be applicable, I feel, to both professional and non-professional play productions. That there are professional actors and directors and non-professional actors and directors is an artificial dualism. This view may be taken for, at the very heart of the matter, we are exploring the dynamism of art, group experience, and human relationships; these are the common, basic factors in both the tributary and the professional theatre.

I would add that the factors of age level, range of training and experience, economic and social relationships may necessitate adaptation of the techniques to suit the specific occasion, but, essentially, the analysis is presented as sound for rehearsing the play, whether it be in the professional or the tributary theatre.

THE ART OF REHEARSAL

Anyone who, as director, has worked with a group of actors is most likely to retain vivid memories of that series of experiences we choose to call the rehearsal. Undoubtedly, he will have reacted to the group experience which will have taken place; he will have become deeply involved in the dynamism of art experience. Many, for want of a better word, have chosen to call the transformation of the individual actor and the group of actors functioning as a *corp des artistes*, "the magic of the theatre." If it were indeed magic, how best to approach rehearsals and to conduct rehearsals would defy understanding and analysis; we might set down poetic descriptions of rehearsing the play, but, for a successful production of a play which would satisfy its

audiences, we would be wholly dependent upon a few intuitive geniuses who direct. Genius, temperament, intuition will always be of inestimable value in the creation of art, but today we are less dependent on the genius and the hit-or-miss approach to the art of theatre. By drawing upon the insights which a study of psychoanalysis provides, we can analyze and predicate some techniques for the art of rehearsal in the theatre.

"On the whole it is psychoanalysis which supplies the technical methods and the points of view, the application of which is to prove fruitful in these other provinces. The mental life of the human individual yields, under psychoanalytic investigation, explanations which solve many a riddle in the life of the masses of mankind, or, at any rate, can show these problems in their true light." (7)

THE ACTOR

The diversity and the range of motivations which bring men and women, as actors, to worship at the altar of Dionysus, are, indubitably, many and complex. The neurotic, out of disaffection with himself, is very often attracted to art in search of self, but Otto Rank and others have offered substantial evidence that the neurotic and the artist are not always one and the same. (8) In respect to theatre, it is important that the director has an understanding of this, and it will enable him to understand, in many cases, why the aspirant to the role of actor fails. It behooves the director to separate the sheep from the goats, the neurotics from the potential artists.

Other than that, it should be of little, or no, concern to the director what the unconscious motivations are of each individual who would be an actor. These are private matters of the individual, and they are deeply personal; as such they must be respected as private and personal by the director.

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7. Sigmund Freud, *A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis*, (New York: Permabooks, 1953), p. 176.
 8. Otto Rank, *Art and Artist*, (New York: Tudor Publishing Co. [c. 1932]), p. 54.

The director must not confuse his role with that of confessor or psychoanalyst. What has been stated is not incompatible, nor is it to be confused, with the need of the director to understand the fundamental psychology of human behavior.

THE DIRECTOR

Turning to the director, he, as well as those with whom he works, will benefit to the extent to which he has deep and honest insight into his motivation to become a director. As in the case of the actors, his motivation is most likely to be complex. Mingled with all the positive aspects of an urge to be creative, he may have to face, e.g., the possibility of a compulsive drive for power within him, which is seeking release through the directing of the activities of actors. The repression or denial of the possibility of such negative compulsions for power, prestige, or competition will lead, as does the night the day, to serious difficulties in his work with the actors in rehearsal. With insight, and an honest alertness, to the possibility of these compulsions, he should be able to control them and to channel the energies invested in compulsion into constructive attitudes towards his actors.

The most constructive attitude the director can strive for in his relationship with his actors is identification with the actors. (9) The extent to which he works to enable the actors to realize *themselves* as actors creating a characterization is the extent to which he truly succeeds as director.

"On the contrary, so far as possible, we refrain from playing the part of mentor; we want nothing better than that the patient *should find his own solutions for himself.*" (Italics mine.) (10)

The actors and the director have a common goal which is to bring to life, for the audience, the play provided by the writer. Focusing on this common goal leads to harmony through a realization of inter-dependency of actor with

9. Otto Rank, *Art and Artist*, P. 54

10. Sigmund Freud, *A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis*, P. 441

actors and actors with director; their success is common and cannot be achieved otherwise.

"Tout ce qu'on peut faire, pour un acteur qui se prepare à la représentation, c'est de l'encourager et de le mettre dans le climat le plus favorable à son épanouissement C'est au cours des répétitions que la mise en scène s'establit; que les acteurs prennent leurs places . . . trouvent leur rythme personnel et enfin *s'harmonisent avec le jeu de leur partenaires.*" (Italics mine.) (11)

"These rules are founded on experience. They are of no use to a director who regards players not as fellow-artists collaborating with him, but as employees on whom he can impose his own notions of acting and his own interpretation of the author's meaning." (12)

"The actor has to work out these suppositions for himself and give them his own interpretation. If the director tries to force them on him—the result is violence. In my way of doing, this cannot happen because the actor asks the director for what he needs as he needs it. This is an important condition for free, individual creativeness." (13)

TRANSFERENCE

What will transpire during the period of rehearsal between director and actor we may define as transference, a term derived out of Freud's theory of psychoanalysis. Before applying it for insight into the art of rehearsal, let us turn to a definition of the term provided for us by Sigmund Freud:

"The cause of the disturbance is found to consist in certain intense feelings of affection which the patient has transferred on to the physician, not accounted for by the latter's behavior, nor by the relationship involved by the treatment. The form in which the affectionate feeling is expressed, and the goal it seeks, naturally depend upon the circumstances of the situation between the two persons . . . The new fact

11. Jean-Louis Barrault, *Phedre: Mise-en-scene*, (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1946), p. 41.
12. G. B. Shaw, *Shaw's Rules for Directors*, (Paris: World Theatre, 1948), p. 9.
13. C. Stanislavsky, *An Actor Prepares*, (New York: Theatre Arts, Inc., 1953), p. 287.

. . . we call *Transference*; a transference of feelings on to the person of the physician." (14)

The almost total lack or, at best, paucity of indirect reference to transference in the relationship between directors and actors in the writings of Barrault, Stanislavsky, and Shaw is, in itself, a curious hiatus. All who have directed have experienced the growing intensity of the relationship between actor and director as the rehearsing of the play proceeds. One may only speculate as to their silence in this matter. Perhaps, as artists, they have taken it for granted and handled the resulting tensions, resistances, and even explosions as best they could. Shaw seems to have been aware of the phenomenon as a problem, and he touches lightly on it in passing. "The tact and the judgment of directors in their very delicate relations with players are sometimes strained to the utmost." (15)

There seems to have been little attempt to understand transference or to explain it; one may assume that by trial and error each, as director, dealt with transference as best he could.

Drawing upon psychoanalytic insights, it is the contention of the writer that the director should understand transference and recognize it for its inestimable value in rehearsal. Freud has this to say about the value, and the importance, of transference in psychoanalytic treatment:

"First let us realize at once that the transference exists in the patient from the beginning of the treatment, and is for a time the strongest impetus in the work. Nothing is seen of it and one does not need to trouble about it as long as its effect is favourable to the work in which the two persons are cooperating. . . . Then the transference, which every time seemed the great menace, becomes its best instrument, so that with its help we can unlock the closed doors in the soul." (16)

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14. Sigmund Freud, *A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis*, P. 449
 15. G. B. Shaw, *Shaw's Rules for Directors*, P. 9
 16. Sigmund Freud, *A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis*, Pp. 450, 451.

As for the director, he should permit it to occur and then direct its energies in a manner which will be most constructive for the actors, and for the performing of the play. There is more to be said later of this re-directing transference.

The relationship between the patient and the analyst, like that between the actor and the director, is a human relationship, and in the case of both, the relationship becomes a type of emotional involvement. Likewise, as in psychoanalysis, the actor, who is dependent upon the director for guidance and perspective, reacts unconsciously toward the director as a parental figure. On this basis we may construct our parallel.

As long as the positive aspects of transference prevail, the director is able to influence the actor.

"A human being is, therefore, on the whole only accessible to influence, even on the intellectual side, insofar as he is capable of investing objects with libido; and we have good cause to recognize this." (17)

The actor is struggling with his inhibitions, his feeling of insecurity in a new and unfamiliar environment (the character of the play); he is assailed by fears that he may be inadequate to the challenge of the role. As did the actor's parents when the actor was a child, the director utilizes the emotional involvement, which is transference, to build up the confidence of the actor in himself; to free himself of fears and inhibitions, to test his powers. There are many ancient saws and old folk sayings, in all cultures, to the effect that the lover faces death gladly rather than be found wanting in the eyes of the beloved. (Love is used here in its broadest sense as emotional involvement, such as occurs between parents and children, friends, teachers and students.)

In view of the great power for good that transference has put into the hands of the director, the director should take as his prime responsibility that of convincing the actor of his (the director's) complete confidence that the actor can

17. Sigmund Freud, *A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis*, P. 453

succeed in the role assigned to him. The imaginative director will seek out ways in which he can dramatize and demonstrate most vividly the sincerity and the breadth and depth of his confidence in the actors. This presents the director with a problem which he will have to solve with imagination; but the degree of imagination and the resources he brings to directing will mean the difference between a mediocre and an able director. (18)

RESISTANCE

Those who would foster transference between themselves as directors and their actors must be aware of the risks involved, and the crises which may arise; they need to be sensitive to the ambivalence in feelings on the part of the actors which transference may bring on. The feelings of human beings are rarely simple and without contradictions; in most human relationships there is likely to be conflict between affection and hostility:

"The hostile feelings, as a rule, appear later than the affectionate and under cover of them; when both occur simultaneously they provide a very good exemplification of that ambivalence in feeling which governs most of our intimate relationships with other human beings." (19)

The child in its relations with its parents may welcome the security of dependence, and at the same time feel the

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18. As an example, at all times I have striven, in my relations with my actors, through word and deed, to acquaint them with my feelings as to the importance of the theatre and the work they are doing in the theatre. On opening nights I point out to them, before curtain time, that were I not convinced of their ability to live up to the challenge of what I am about to do, I would not do it. If it is *Antigone*, I may sprinkle the deck of the stage with some earth from the Theatre of Dionysus, where *Antigone* was first performed; or, on another occasion, I may appoint one of the actresses Deputy for the company and let her wear, e.g., a hairpin worn by a contemporary actress of note, such as Katharine Cornell. The results have been impressive.
 19. Sigmund Freud, *A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis*, P. 451

need for freedom through assertion of independence; the actor wants the help and encouragement of the director and, at the same time, wants to be free and independent.

"The urge to create and the imparting of form . . . may be stated as the gradual freeing of the individual from dependence." (20)

Freud has this to say concerning the appearance of resistance arising out of transference:

"When it (transference) becomes transformed into a resistance, attention must be paid to it . . . The hostile feelings therefore indicate an attachment of feeling quite similar to the affectionate, just as defiance indicates a similar dependence, upon the other person, to that belonging to obedience, though with a reversed prefix." (21)

The understanding of transference, and the resistance which occurs alongside of it, or arises out of it, should guide the director in the matter of how he relates himself to his company of actors. Space does not permit a detailed exposition of all the practical ways to avoid crises in actor-director relationships and to channel the actor's emotions into other relationships which will prove most constructive for the actors and the production.

However, at no time, it seems to me, should the director request the actor to execute a necessary bit of theatrical business, to perform in a particular manner, or to project vocally because he, the director, wants it that way. At all times the director should give direction to the actor in the context that: 1) This will enable the actor to realize, more effectively, the character he is seeking to create, or: 2) This will enable his fellow actor to realize more fully his characterization, or: 3) This is for the total good of the production, in which all are involved, or: 4) This is best in terms of the physical relationship of the actors with their audience, for whom they are preparing the play.

Through word and deed, the director should endeavor

20. Otto Rank, *Art and Artist*, P. xxiii

21. Sigmund Freud, *A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis*, P. 451

persistently and consistently to convince the actors of his genuine solicitude for the actor as an individual, for the actors as a group, for the audience for whom all are working, and for the theatre as a national cultural institution, and for the theatre as a universal art. In simple language, the director should play down the authority with which he, both as director and as symbolic parental figure, is in fact invested. This is of some special importance in working with American actors.

"The typical American attitudes toward authority have remained substantially the same as those manifested by the framers of the American Constitution; authority is inherently bad and dangerous; the survival and growth of the state make it inevitable that some individuals must be endowed with authority; but this authority must be as circumscribed, and limited as legal ingenuity can devise; and the holders of these positions should be under constant scrutiny, should be watched as potential enemies. These attitudes toward the concept of authority over people, and toward persons placed in positions of authority, are basic to the understanding of American character and American behavior." (22)

Before resistance will have set in on the part of the actors, as outlined above, the sensitive director will have shifted the emotional involvements from himself.

"It is out of the question that we should yield to the demands made by the patient under the influence of his transference; it would be nonsensical to reject them unkindly, and still more so, indignantly. The transference is overcome by showing the patient that his feelings do not originate in the current situation, and do not really concern the person of the physician." (23)

The director orients the actor to identify himself and his best interest with the group. A practical way to achieve this may be to make the group more and more dependent upon their own resources; he relegates responsibility to members of the group; he gradually frees the group for

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22. Geoffrey Gorer, *The American People*, (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1948), p. 32.
 23. Sigmund Freud, *A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis*, P. 451

making more of the decisions for the group. (Usually a line must be drawn by the director between simple problems and their solutions involving schedules of rehearsals, and the problems and decisions involving aesthetics; decisions in artistic matters is still largely, by necessity, the prerogative of the director.) Moving on from the immediate group, the director seeks to orient the actor to identify himself with the theatre as an institution—involving consideration for the audience—and to identify himself with drama as an art deserving of sincere dedication. Since transference takes place first between the actor and the director, it is the responsibility of the director to transmit these attitudes to the actors. If these attitudes are lacking in the director, they cannot be evoked from the actors by the director.

Before leaving the principle of transference, and its application to the relationship between actors and director, it seems wise to consider the social aspect of the rehearsal, for such it is, in part. This may be debatable, but in view of the dynamism in transference which occurs, has been invited and fostered, it would seem advisable for the director to remain aloof from the actors to the extent that beyond the rehearsal hall he does not build his own social life among the actors. Control of transference and a willingness to shift transference to the group is the responsibility of the director; to do this the director must be able to maintain a high degree of objectivity concerning his relationships with the actors. Many directors have found it difficult when they have sought their relaxation and companionship among the actors they are directing.

PLEASURE PRINCIPLE

Freud's two principles of Pleasure and Reality provide the director with two valuable insights in his work with actors. It may be said that they provide him with two very important tools which will enable him to achieve the results he seeks in rehearsing a play. If we accept that a basic motivation in human behavior is procuring pleasure, it would indeed be wise for the director to understand that a basic

motivation for actors wanting to act is pleasure.

"It seems that our entire psychical activity is bent upon *procuring pleasure* and *avoiding pain*, that it is automatically regulated by the Pleasure-Principle. . . We may only venture to say that pleasure is in some way connected with lessening, lowering, or extinguishing the amount of stimulation present in the mental apparatus; and that pain involves a heightening of the latter." (24)

"My main objection, however, is to putting an actor in an impossible position. He must not be forcibly fed on other people's ideas, conceptions, emotion memories or feelings. Each person has to live through his own experiences. . . . An actor cannot be fattened like a capon. *His own appetite must be tempted.*" (Italics mine) (25)

"La representation est un acte de joie, un acte de joie . . . dans l'effort." (26)

Shaw also was aware of the need to assist the actor in removing from the context of the production anything which mitigated against the actor achieving his goal of pleasure through acting. "When the movements are thoroughly rehearsed and mastered, the director should ask the players whether they are comfortable for them all, and if not, what is wrong." (27)

REALITY PRINCIPLE

It is the responsibility of the director, therefore, to bend his efforts toward creating a climate in which the actors can enjoy themselves. During that period of doldrums when the actors are struggling for lines, or when technical rehearsals impede the smooth functioning of the actors, the director has a responsibility to initiate excitation of the actors. His enthusiasm for the play must never flag; he must deny himself the comfort of sharing his fatigue, boredom or anxieties with his actors.

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24. Sigmund Freud, *A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis*, P. 365
 25. C. Stanislavsky, *An Actor Prepares*, P. 186
 26. Jean-Louis Barrault, *Phédré: Mise-en-scene*, P. 42
 27. G. B. Shaw, *Shaw's Rules for Directors*, P. 6

There would seem to be little argument that one of the pleasures which actors find in acting is excitation and a pleasurable release of tension through exhibition; or another way of putting it is that ego satisfaction comes to some human beings out of the prestige, the sense of importance, the recognition that performing in a play before an audience provides. Since all of the actors may be striving for as much of this pleasure for themselves as they can get, the director must control the pleasure seeking of the individual actors by invoking the reality principle.

"At first the other group, the ego-instincts . . . under the influence of necessity, their mistress, . . . soon learn to replace the pleasure principle by a modification of it. The task of avoiding pain becomes for them almost equal in importance to that of gaining pleasure; the ego learns that it must inevitably go without immediate satisfaction, postpone gratification, learn to endure a degree of pain, and altogether renounce certain sources of pleasure. Thus trained, the ego, becomes "reasonable", is no longer controlled by the pleasure principle, but follows the Reality Principle, which at bottom also seeks pleasure—although a delayed and diminished pleasure, one which is assured by its realization of fact, its relation to reality." (28)

In terms of the theatre, the job of the director is to train the actors, e.g., to relinquish center stage, from time to time, to the other actors as dictated by the reality of the play. The more the actors are made conscious, by the director, of the importance of ensemble acting for the realization of the pleasure each seeks, the more the ego of the actor will yield to the reality principle.

In very practical terms, actors—as are nearly all human beings—are dependent upon the approval of the group. When the director points out to the offending actor that he has "unwittingly" up-staged his fellow actor, or that he has "jumped" his cue, cutting lines of the other actors, and that if he persists in this his fellow actors will not take it kindly—in most cases the actor will correct his error,

28. Sigmund Freud, *A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis*, P. 365

intentional or unintentional, for he needs the good-will of his co-workers.

In summation, these are but three of the principles of psycho-analysis which may be applied to the art of rehearsal; there are many more psychoanalytic insights which may be profitably brought to bear on that delicate relationship between actor and director of which Shaw speaks. Moreover, it is not the intention of the writer to imply that the practical suggestions set forth above exhaust the three principles in their application to the theatre. This is but the beginning.

32 West 76 St.
New York 23, N. Y.



Psychologic Evolution in Character Formation

by

Arnold Maddaloni

In writing about the object of psychoanalysis Groddeck says that it has more important spheres of work "than that of treating the sick; it is, there can no longer be any doubt, the open road, and the road that must be used, for the investigation of human nature, and so for the investigation of the world. . ." (1) This paper attempts to develop the view that the concept of psychologic evolution is the most useful for this widespread application of psychoanalysis.

The coordination of psychoanalytic methods into the social sciences, particularly pedagogy and character formation, involves a re-evaluation of therapy and education. These are so closely related that their separation can only be a matter of degree. Freud recognized the close relationship between these: "Education and therapy now appear in a reciprocal relation to each other. Education will take care that from certain dispositions and tendencies of the child, nothing harmful to the individual or society shall proceed. Therapy will come into play if these same dispositions have already caused the unwished-for result of a pathological symptom." (2) But have we fully developed our methods so that psychoanalysis could be more adequately integrated into all the branches of the social sciences? Has psychoanalysis evolved from an art to being a science? It has

(1) Groddeck, Georg. *Exploring the Unconscious*, Funk & Wagnalls Co., New York, 1950, p. 219.

(2) See: Introduction to *The Psychoanalytic Method*, by Oscar Pfister, Moffat, Yard & Company, New York.

been said that while the physical scientists are solving their problems, the social scientists are still developing their methods. Perhaps the greatest stride will be made when we can include an evolutionary concept in its subjective aspect as a process of psychologic maturing (or sublimation) in character formation. If we think of this psychologic maturing in its descriptive aspects, we get evolution as physical and overt behavior-changes. If we think of this maturing process as the adoption or affirmation of some conventionally-accepted opinions, we get a change of symptoms only. As part of this kind of social recovery the progressive accumulation of cultural data is often considered sufficient. The successful use of suggestion as a means of changing symptoms cannot be considered scientific in the strict psychoanalytic sense. And those who try "successful repression" of conscious conflicting impulses into "unconscious" mentation are perpetuating pathologic infantile fixations. In its subjective aspects, psychologic evolution (maturing or sublimation) involves the impulses and the way they become effective in action and thought.

It is obvious that a purely social adaptation (a change of symptoms), the adoption of socially accepted standards of behavior, cannot be considered scientific maturing or evolution of the psyche. Related to all of this is the question of a definition of "mental health" and "normality." Eaton comes to the conclusion, after reviewing a score of opinions by experts on mental health, that it is "conceptual abstraction." The opinions of these experts offered no adequate explanation of mental disease or health. One sentence, however, gave a clue. Eaton said that "the degree of mental health cannot . . . be measured by external blockings that might be studied objectively; it is a function of *subjective* reactions to these blockings." (3) (Italics are mine.) It would seem, therefore, that mental health, or the lack of it, signifies not the absence of external conflict

(3) Eaton, Joseph W. *The Assessment of Mental Health*, The American Journal of Psychiatry, August 1951.

or frustrations, but the manner of handling them. We might say that there are relative degrees of remoteness from, or approach to, "absolute psychologic maturity," if it is possible to conceive of it. The question of "normal" character, or even the attempt to establish "cultural normality," in personality development defeats the purpose of psychologic evolution. There are only relative degrees of approach and integration. As Abraham has said: "Psychoanalysis has never set up norms of this sort, but contents itself with ascertaining psychological facts. It simply ascertains how far an individual or a group of persons has managed to travel along the line of development from the earliest stage to the latest in the structure of their character." (4)

If we presume to have an objective standard for evaluating the psychologic growth of an individual, or of society, then how can we presume to declare an individual "cured" without reference to the maturity of the society to which he is adjusting? Or, how mature are the prevailing conventions, which we have more or less accepted as being the norm? Just how do we relate the various degrees of sublimation (considering it as a process instead of a state) to the infantile, childish, adolescent, and post-adolescent and the more psychologically mature levels of our *inner processes*? One more question: with the absence of a psycho-evolutionary scale, how can a social recovery accord a contrast or method of judging the relative maturity of impulses, and of the intellectual methods by means of which they make themselves effective in action and thought?

Previous attempts to work out these concepts have seen evolution only in terms of external symptoms. In other words, emphasis was put upon behavior changes and intellectual (logical) accomplishment. It is now known that logic or reason are insufficient in bringing about a cure. The success or failure of man's relation to man depends upon the degree of intensity and immaturity of his inner

(4) Abraham, Karl. *Selected Papers*, The Hogarth Press, London, 1927, p. 411.

conflicts. Also, the condition of mental health of any person is dependent upon how nicely adjusted these inner emotional forces are. Conflict is never static. Sometimes change is in the form of regression. At other times change in conflict may be a resolution, in which the conflict resolves itself on some higher level. As White expressed it: "No solution of the conflict can come about except by the satisfaction of both these diametrically opposed tendencies. It follows, too, that no conflict can be solved at the level of the conflict. That is, two mutually opposed tendencies can never unite their forces, except at a higher level in an all inclusive synthesis which lifts the whole situation to a level above that on which the conflict arose." (5) Rapaport sees this unifying principle and tries to do away with the arbitrary segregation of conation, cognition, and affection. Even memory, association, and imagination are conceptualized as various aspects of thought organization. (6) Other attempts have been made to see this unifying principle and without it we cannot hope to achieve a worth while goal, either in therapy or in education. As to sublimation, it could never be a psychologic evolution as distinguished from a social change, without this unifying concept.

Many may ask: What is the goal to be achieved in psychotherapy? The goal, either in psychotherapy or in education, should be considered only in terms of the degree of psychologic immaturity. This question of the level of the inner conflict requires more intensive study. Knight writes of psychotherapies which aim at "significant alterations in personality structure rather than at symptomatic relief."

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- (5) White, William A. *Mechanisms of Character Formation*, The Macmillan Company, 1922, p. 274.
 - (6) Rapaport, David. *The Conceptual Model of Psychoanalysis*, in *Psychoanalytic Psychiatry and Psychology*, Vol. 1, Ed. by Robert P. Knight. International Universities Press, Inc. 1954.
 - (7) Knight, Robert P. *A Critique of the Present Status of the Psychotherapies*, in *Psychoanalytic Psychiatry and Psychology*, Ed. by Robert P. Knight, International Universities Press, Inc. New York, 1954, pp. 63-64.

(7) This, it seems to me, is the crux of psychotherapy and education (or re-education). The use of the word pedagogy or education in this essay does not involve intellectual processes alone. And, although suggestion is commonly used in all forms of education, it must be distinguished from the effort at basic character changes. As suggestion is usually reinforced by rationalistic pleas, and for the expediency of reform and conformity, this type of re-education includes an "ever widening range of cultural and experiential data. . . the attack (is) made only upon the troublesome symptoms." (8) Psychologic growth in the patient (or pupil) was at first thought of only as a change from anti-social to pro-social attitudes and symptoms (ethical, religious or social sublimations), and a growing extraversion of interest. It is apparent that all this did not directly attack suggestibility, nor imply a *psychologic* sublimation. Although it was a long step toward the more modern conception of a scientific procedure, there is still lacking an adequate view of the "subjective aspect of mental evolution, as a working basis for minimizing suggestibility and promoting a psychologic sublimation as distinguished from a social sublimation." (9) The fine distinction between treating symptoms and outgrowing the inner conflict, is the difference between mere naked suggestion and the psychologic maturing of psychoanalytic discipline. It is the difference between treating symptoms and treating underlying conflicts; between a logical understanding of psychoanalytic theory, and an empathic insight into the psycho-genetics of the subjective conflict.

Let us see if we can get the concept of psychologic sublimation or evolution in terms of the subjective changes that take place. Consideration must be given to the relative degrees of qualitative differences and changes that take place

(8) Schroeder, Theodore. *Psycho-therapeutics: From Art to Science*, Psychoanalytic Review, Vol. XVIII, No. 1, January, 1931.

(9) Reference footnote 8.

in our desires. Do we make a distinction between changes that occur as a result of suggestion, and that of a developing process through psychologic evolution or growth? Do we think of resolving an inner conflict by outgrowing it; that is, through evolving it to a psycho-evolutionary level above that on which the conflict arose?

Sublimation, according to Abraham, is "The deflection of repressed sexual ideas and feelings on to social spheres." On the other hand, Freud has indicated a distinction which should be kept in mind: "A man who has exchanged his narcissism for the worship of a high ego-ideal has not necessarily on that account succeeded in sublimating his libidinal instincts." (10) To Jones "A solution of the conflict between the repressing and repressed forces may be reached, whereby the energy of the latter is diverted to other aims. . ." Jones distinguishes between sublimation and reaction-formation and he shows that in "contradistinction to sublimation, where energy is not only derived from the repressed impulse but flows in the same direction as it, that of reaction-formations is derived from the opposing ego forces and is aimed in exactly the opposite direction." (11) Although this is the correct differentiation one could still interpret this to mean that sublimation is the adoption of socially approved symptoms in the direct line of the repressed impulse. For instance, using an example given by Jones, "the primitive tendency to self-display (of the person) may be sublimated into taking pleasure in self-prominence, either physically or in oratory," or many other varieties of fame-seeking. This sublimation, it must be noted, could still be based on more infantile pathological fixations. Self-prominence could also be sadistic exhibitionism. The reaction-formation to this, on the other hand, may lead to modesty and shame. It seems to me that we must evolve sublimation in accordance with psychologic

(10) Collected Papers, IV. London, 1925, p. 52.

(11) Jones, Ernest. *Papers on Psychoanalysis* (4th ed.) William Wood & Company, Baltimore, 1938.

maturing. To say, as Freud did, that sublimation is "directing a certain amount of libido to a higher artistic aim," does not tell us what psycho-evolutionary level of emotional components go into the "higher artistic aim." Rather, on what psycho-evolutionary level does sublimation function? Artistic production and cultural values are thought to be desirable goals without giving consideration to the degree of emotional (affective) maturity underlying their creation.

Evolution in character-formation must exclude psychologic maturing as thought of in descriptive psychology. Overt-behavior changes toward the affirmation of conventionally-accepted opinions and customs cannot be considered as a true sublimation, or psychologic maturing. The resolution of the inner-conflict or the unification of these impulses on a level above that upon which they originally arose offers the only true sublimation, and not the satisfaction of one of these tendencies. When Bleuler wrote of ambivalence he said that it "gives to the same idea two contrary feeling tones and invests the same thought simultaneously with both a positive and a negative character." (12) However, there is no indication of the subjective unity of these "two contrary feeling tones," and whereby a person can outgrow the level upon which they function. In character-formation, as Abraham mentions, of great importance "is that in which the individual *overcomes* his attitude of ambivalence." (13) (Italics are mine.) Here Abraham is implying an *outgrowing* of the conflict, and he seems to recognize an evolutionary process going on in the psyche. He writes of a "final stage of development" and he admits that "as long as a severe conflict of ambivalent feelings continues to exist in a person's character, there is always a danger both for him and for his environment that he may suddenly swing from one extreme to its opposite." (14) In the next paragraph

(12) Bleuler, E. *The Theory of Schizophrenic Negativism*, Nervous and Mental Disease Monograph Series, No. 11.

(13) Abraham, Karl. *Selected Papers*, London, Hogarth Press, 1927.

(14) Reference footnote 13.

Abraham continues to explain development of character to its "highest level" and that "development of this sort goes hand in hand with a relatively successful conquest of his narcissistic attitude and his ambivalence." His use of the words "overcome" and "conquest" could only signify a *growing* process. If, as White says, "the psychoneuroses are essentially disturbances in the process of development at the psychological level," then we can assume that only a re-integration of these forces can bring about a resolution to a higher level. (15)

An adequate empathic insight into, and understanding of, ambivalence and conflict will reveal the significance of this psychic mechanism. Jelliffe and White relate ambivalence with ambivalence "which sets free with every tendency a counter-tendency. With this basal supposition it can be understood why the fluctuation of the manic-depressive is a fluctuation between conditions which are diametrically opposed." (16)

The co-existence of antithetic emotional attitudes, such as love and hate, are expressed by the neurotic person, and this without either expression modifying the other. The effort to utilize love as a means of overcoming hate, considered as part of the curative process, indicates to what extent some have failed to understand this relationship. The subjective unity of love and hate is unconsciously brought out by a clergyman when he said that "to love God one must hate God's enemies." Another example is the woman who had so much love for animals that she threatened to boil any man in oil for harming a dog. There can be no doubt that unconscious hate may appear as conscious love.

A change of symptoms from one aspect over to its so-called opposite is no reason for considering it as a maturing process. A religious fanatic and a fanatic atheist express

(15) *Psychoanalytic Parallel*, The Psychoanalytic Review, Vol. 11. No. 2.

(16) Jelliffe, S. E. and White, W. A. *Diseases of the Nervous System* (6th ed.) Lea & Febiger, Phila., 1935.

different and supposedly opposite symptoms of behavior and belief. Nevertheless, they have the same basic psychodynamics. The inner-conflict is the same but the rationalization for it is different, and that varies with experience. In social recovery, as distinguished from psychologic recovery, we can see one side of conflicting trends remaining dominant while the other is repressed. In an analysis of psychologic evolution in relation to effecting a cure, Schroeder puts emphasis on the evolution of the psyche: "Every symptomatic improvement does not necessarily constitute, or imply, any permanent elimination, or even a great *lessening of the intensity* of the pathologic conflict of impulses . . . there is a vast difference between the actual *outgrowing* of troublesome infantile impulses, reaction-patterns and morbid suggestibility, and the temporary imitation of the behavior of mentally grown-ups." (17)

In a discussion on the *Development of the Ego and Superego* Lampl-De Groot made the point that aggression, "which disturbs the social relations of men" should be checked by reaction-formations. To quote De Groot: "To check this, reaction-formations against it have to be developed, e.g., over-compensation in loving one's fellow-men. We know how often people fail and fall back upon open or hidden hostility. To use a popular expression: the question is whether love can remain stronger than hatred." (18) The logical conclusion is to perpetuate the inner conflict on the same level upon which it arose while still making an environmental adaptation which is purely symptomatic. The social change is recognized. There is an actual improvement as far as "loving one's fellow-men" is concerned. There is doubt, however, as to the outgrowing of morbid suggestibility on the part of the one who loves. In the other extreme of "split-personality," the one who hates, we find the same

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- (17) Schroeder, Theodore. *What is a Psychologic Recovery?* Psychoanalytic Review, Vol. XXII: (No. 3) July, 1935.
- (18) Lampl-De Groot, Jeanne. *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, Vol. XXVIII, 1947. Reprinted in The Yearbook of Psychoanalysis, Vol. 4. 1948.

subjective unity of conflict. It is to be noted that in the same person it can be one or the other (love or hate), depending upon which side of the inner conflict is dominant.

The question of the development of reaction-formation as distinguished from the original or genetic drive underlying these formations has been confusing in psycho-analytic literature. Are such reaction-formations autonomous? Do they remain fixed and therefore resist change? Or, can psychoanalytic re-conditioning change the character of reaction-formations, or do away with them completely, so as to make reliance upon them unnecessary? To Freud the mechanism of reaction-formation is "insecure and constantly threatened by the impulse which lurks in the unconscious." This, I presume, means that aggression can be held in check by sympathy and love, but that this is usually difficult to maintain and therefore may very easily give way to its opposite. If Freud is correct, then the whole mechanism is relatively useless in the process of psychologic maturing. In reaction-formation, conscious, socialized attitudes and interests are developed as a dam or reaction against unconscious, infantile unsocialized drives. At whatever level the inner-conflict is functioning the reaction-formation will only develop and function to that level. There is no psychologic maturing because the conflict has not been even slightly resolved to a more mature level. The repressed (hate) impulse is simply held in check and there is the possibility of its return to consciousness. Love again turns to hate. Loving one's fellow men had given way to the repressed aggression.

Money-Kytle recognized reaction-formations as being symptoms only. He says that "irrelevant avoidances which are symptoms make up what psycho-analysts call the reaction-formations in the neuroses." (19) On sublimation he gives an example which makes the result, regardless of motive, seem important: "The statesman who devotes his life to the protection of his country against a remote danger,

(19) Money-Kytle, R. E. *The Development of the Sexual Impulses*, Kegan Paul, Trench & Co., Ltd., London, 1932. pp. 172-3.

may owe his energy to a symbolic or irrelevant resemblance between the idea of foreign aggression and the unconscious fear of castration. But if the danger happens to be real, this type of anxious patriotism has a secondary relevance, and is a sublimation rather than a neurotic symptom." Here it is obvious that an external situation, economically, socially, or militarily, changes neurotic symptoms to a sublimation. The conditions for measuring psychologic evolution in this case would appear to depend upon certain military facts.

To Freud a successful reaction-formation seemed necessary for a cure of neurosis: "What did we regard as the essence of a neurosis? The fact that the Ego, the more highly organized part of the mental apparatus bred up under the influence of the outer world, is not in a position to fulfill its function of mediation between Id and reality; that in its weakness it retreats from some part of the instinctual activity of the Id; and suffers the consequences of this renunciation in the form of contractions of its influence, symptoms and *unsuccessful reaction-formations.*" (20) (Italics are mine.) Yet Freud also saw the subjective unity of an inner conflict. For example: "In the Id there are no conflicts; contradictions and antitheses exist side by side, and often equalize matters between themselves by compromise formation. But the Ego, in similar case, feels a conflict which must be decided, and the decision consists in giving up one impulse in favor of the other. The Ego is an organization, marked out by a very noteworthy tendency towards unity and synthesis. . ." Freud refers to this ambivalence as a process of repression, which is, understandably, the dynamics behind reaction-formation. He says: "Repression, as it invariably does, has brought about a withdrawal of libido, but for this purpose it has made use of a *reaction-formation*, by intensifying an antithesis." (21)

(20) *The Question of Lay Analysis*, W. W. Norton & Co., Inc., New York, 1950. p. 110.

(21) *Collected Papers*, London, 1925, p. 96. Vol. IV. (Repression, 1915)

Italic are Freud's.) Ambivalence, it can be seen, is the expression of an inner-conflict, and as such becomes a mechanism of repression. Freud says later in the same paper that repression is successful at first, but does not hold: "the ambivalence which has allowed repression to come into being by means of reaction-formation also constitutes the point at which the repressed succeeds in breaking through again."

This shows that the very tenuous reaction-formation which permits a relatively stable adjustment can easily break down. Perhaps many of our so-called cures fail because of this situation. The question of the resolution of this conflict, a process of psychologic evolution, must be considered and distinguished from a purely symptomatic alleviation, oftentimes thought of as a "cure." Another quote from Freud will further indicate this subjective unity: "I am indeed of opinion that the antithesis of conscious and unconscious does not hold for instincts. An instinct can never be an object of consciousness—only the idea that represents the instinct. Even in the unconscious, moreover, it can only be represented by an idea. If the instinct did not attach itself to an idea or manifest itself as an affective state, we could know nothing about it." (22) If ideas are symbols of emotions and feelings, and if ideational presentation alone can become repressed and hence unconscious, as Freud intimated when he said that 'the affect was never unconscious but its ideational presentation had undergone repression,' then the original state of emotional energy is one, unified, and only split through ideational formation, or cathexis. Again Freud: "ideas are cathexes—ultimately of memory-traces—whilst affects and emotions correspond with processes of discharge, the final expression of which is perceived as feeling."

The development of an inner-conflict, and its resolution on a higher evolutionary scale must take into account this distinction between the affect and the idea which attaches

(22) Collected Papers, London, 1925, Vol. IV. p. 109 (The unconscious 1915)

to it. A feeling value attaches itself to an idea, but the emotional charge is never in the idea. Hence the importance of seeing the love-hate conflict in its subjective unity, and its various manifestations as the ideational presentation. Freud says that "under repression a severance takes place between the affect and the idea to which it belongs, and that each then fulfills its separate destiny."

Sharpe stressed the necessity of a resolution of the conflict in order to be equipped as psychoanalysts. She says: "Experience proves that unless we pursue this analysis for the sake of the resolution of our own conflicts and a clear understanding of our psychology, the root of the matter is not in us." (23) Sharpe, however, did not explain too thoroughly her meaning of "resolution of our own conflicts." Elsewhere in her papers she mentions again this resolution. For instance: "The person who enjoys the most freedom from mental stress and feels the greatest ego-freedom will be the one who has made a maximum resolution of his conflicts in terms of real people and real things." (24) If we may consider this as a definition of the resolution of conflicts it would seem to apply only to externals. Here we see only the apparent harmony between one person and another, or between a person and a thing; it does not describe the process of the *inner-conflict* and its resolution.

We must constantly keep in mind the distinction between the functions of reaction-formations, which can be mistaken for a reformation of character, and the outgrowing of the present infantile or childish level of the inner-conflict. Sharpe seems to have understood the subjective unity of the inner-conflict when she said that "we have to demonstrate that the same impulses are discernible in the reformation as before it, that obedience has in it the same factors as disobedience—that black is white and white black." This thought suggests that all modes of behavior have this double

(23) Sharpe, Ella Freeman. *Collected Papers on Psycho-Analysis*, The Hogarth Press, Ltd., London, 1950, p. 11.

(24) *Collected Papers*, p. 100.

aspect, but that actually they have their genesis in the same energetic processes. By this is meant that love and hate cannot be considered as opposites, but that they are two different aspects of the same emotional conflict and energy. Reaction-formations show us how one side of a conflict can remain repressed (although still functioning) while the other is working consciously. Sharpe recognized an evolutionary process in the psyche when she spoke about "further psychological evolution," "although she gives no hint as to how this is done.

The extremes of the manic-depressive do not display opposites as we habitually think of opposites. They represent two extreme degrees, or aspects, of the same psychic energy. The active, sleepless, euphoric condition of the manic-depressive, when manic, can easily become the "opposite," depressed and suicidal. Perhaps White gave the best analogy to explain the manic-depressive psychosis when he said that it is like the work of Sisyphus, the avaricious king of Corinth, condemned in Hades to roll up a hill a huge stone, which constantly rolled back. It is, "as if the patient during a manic attack spent all his time trying to roll a stone to the top of a mountain and just at the top the stone slipped, and rolled back, then he goes in the depths of a depression and has to start all over again." (25)

Before Kraepelin classified the psychoses, depressions and excitements were considered to be opposite emotional states with no obvious connection. By studying the life history of both states Kraepelin was able to see a connection, but only vaguely. All that this accomplished was to give the name of manic-depressive psychosis to this phenomenon. As White said, "he was able to define a certain kind of excitement and a certain kind of depression that belong together, so that a patient who had one of these, which ever it was, tended sooner or later in his lifetime to have the other." This was the first realization that two supposedly

(25) *Lectures in Psychiatry*. Nervous and Mental Disease Monograph, p. 100.

opposite affective states had any relationship. Perhaps the various psychoses can be considered as many manifestations of the same basic and underlying conflict. The two aspects of this emotional tension (mania-depression) usually manifest themselves separately and alternately. The subjective unity is more easily understood if one would think of mania and depression as being two aspects of the same subjective energetic process but expressed in different degrees of tension. If we think of suicide and homicide as two aspects of the same thing, and suicide as the turning of one aspect of the individual against another aspect, we find an example of inner conflict in which hate is directed against the self. We can see how conscious mania hides unconscious depression. At another time conscious depression is manifested while manic tendencies are repressed. The subjective unification of the mania-depression would result in the lessening of the cleavage between these two emotional states.

Let us connect this evolutionary picture with the resolution of the conflict. If in the conflict action and reaction are equal and in "opposite" directions, then we can better understand ambivalence and repression. When two "diametrically opposed tendencies" are met we have conflict, and when one succeeds in dominating the other, repression is the result. If suggestion or analysis brings about an equilibrium on the basis of the present psychological level of the conflict, no solution can result. According to White the evolutionary development of the psyche can be achieved only if the whole situation (conflict) is lifted to a psychological level above that upon which it originally arose. In "its broadly genetic aspects—the psycho-neuroses are essentially disturbances in the process of development at the psychological level." (26) This conception of development and evolution is essential in the curative process and in the formation of character. Without it we would remain stagnant. In the field of education it could be revolutionary.

(26) White, W. A. *Psychoanalytic Parallels, Psychoanalytic Review*, Vol. II, No. 2, April 1915.

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If we keep in mind the fact that even a psychologic infant can rationalize his level of fixation with great learning and erudition, we will better understand the relation between the adoption of new or different symptoms and the outgrowing of the infantile fixation.

To summarize, conflict at the psychological level results in one side of opposing forces gaining the ascendancy, while the other is repressed. This may be temporary and a draw is never possible. The formation of character, formation connoting a development or regressive concept, is grounded upon the level of intensity of the conflict. Two irreconcilable impulses can only resolve themselves to a higher level, effecting a greater integration, and thereby a more efficient adjustment with the environment. Psychologic evolution is this process or progression to a higher level of integration, at the psychological level. The resolution of the conflict results in psychologic integration and growth. It is a process necessary for further evolving of relatively immature impulses toward greater adjustment and integration. This is the concept of a more unified personality.

This conception of mental evolution is applicable also to the so-called mentally healthy or "normal" individual. A social adaptation alone does not mean a maturing process that takes place in our impulses. If we keep this in mind we will see that the maladjusted person who later appears socially adapted by suggestion in analysis, because he has accepted the ways of our conventions, does not necessarily mean that both the individual and the society he had adjusted to, are at a mature standard of psychologic evolution. The prevailing conventions have become the norm and this becomes the basis, or goal, of the process of sublimation. According to this view if we sublimate to a particular culture of a maladjusted society, we shall be declared "cured," or "matured."

Those who adhere to the cultural theory of personality development and character disturbance seek to achieve a cure or recovery by setting up one aspect of a conflict (love) against the other aspect (hate). Psychologic maturing is

a process of outgrowing the level at which the emotional conflict arose and proceeded to function. It is the very basis for any psychologic growth, either of the individual, or of society. Our society is mature to the prevailing degree of psychologic evolution of the race; and it will become either more or less mature only in accordance with this psychologic integration. It is to be noted, in connection with our psycho-social evolution, that its further growth is largely determined by the degree of psycho-sexual maturity in the individual.

99 Clinton Avenue,
Stamford, Conn.



Portraits of Fictitious Psychiatrists

by

Robert Plank

The concept of psychotherapy and psychotherapists which the public at large and that part of the public from which our patients are recruited has formed, has long been of understandable interest to the professional persons in the field. Some papers, e.g. the recent ones by Wilmer (5, 6), have focused on the description of psychiatrists and their alleged activities in popular fiction.

There is a limit beyond which such studies can not penetrate: They can not uncover the image of the psychiatrist as it exists in the public's deeper fantasies. For the author of fiction is usually obliged to keep his portraits reasonably well within the bounds of realism. The rules of his craft do not permit him to describe psychiatrists as he thinks they ought to be or as he thinks they secretly are. He can not project his real fantasy images of psychiatrists into stories and plays which he wants to publish through regular channels.

It is fortunate for our purpose that a genre of literature which is not shackled by these conventions has grown to major proportions in recent years: namely, science fiction. The science fiction writer describes imaginary worlds which are not subject to all our laws. He is not compelled to present realistic pictures. He can construct any image of a psychiatrist—or, for that matter, of any creature. He is therefore able to reveal his real feelings more freely, just as the person responding to the stimulus of a projective test can reveal more than he would in responding to ordinary, more structured stimuli.

Science fiction deals by definition with situations that

develop from a fictitious scientific or technological innovation. These discoveries or inventions are preponderantly in fields rather removed from psychiatry—space travel, which is by far the most popular motif; robots and automation; more recently with increasing frequency, mutations; social systems. With all this to choose from, there is nothing in the basic ingredients of science fiction which would compel an author to introduce any reference to psychiatry or related fields at all. A review of any of the leading science fiction magazines shows that, nevertheless, such references abound. Furthermore, their content reveals, with remarkable consistency, certain attitudes which differ considerably from those expressed in more conventional literature.

Space does not permit more than a few examples.

Mind Alone (2) is the story of a war between Earth and Murrane, a planet outside the Solar System. For reasons too complex to go into here, its outcome depends entirely on the possession of certain information. Dr. James Ball obtains it. His enemies kill him for it and subject his daughter Lorna to a radical procedure which is to insure the obliteration of her identity:

... they systematically destroyed her knowledge. . . . All her memories of every event in her life were cleared away like so much rubble. She didn't know who she was or anything she had ever done.

... they told her . . . that she was Muriel Martin. She repeated the name hesitantly . . .

After that, they changed her physically. First they altered her metabolism. . . .

The process, however, wasn't done with kindness, consideration and loving care. Since there had to be pain, they used it for conditioning. To make sure that the conditioning was effective, they did nothing about quite a lot of pain that could have been avoided.

Alas for the best-laid plans of mice and men! Captain Peter Clark, the Security Officer who is assigned to investigate Muriel Martin (and destined to become her lover as early as on p. 21) dimly guesses the truth though she does

not yet, and takes her to the "one psychiatrist on Venus who might be able to find out something more about this."

Dr. Waterson was one of the new electronic psychiatrists. He seemed to have grown a little electronic himself; he hummed like an electric motor as he worked, his little black eyes glittered like nuclei, and his black hair perpetually stood on end as if charged with electricity.

He also turns out to be extremely competent. His examinations establish that whatever had been done to the heroine had been done by electronic psychiatry. Two leaders in this field are said to live on Earth—Dr. Hyneker and Dr. Ball. The latter, of course, is Muriel's father and dead to boot, but all that is known at the time is that he cannot be found.

So they went to see Dr. Hyneker.

Dr. Hyneker was curiously like the psychiatrist they had seen on Venus. He gave the same impression of being a machine himself . . .

The doctor took a sheaf of papers from the bottom of a pile and began to deal them out on the desk like a pack of cards. . . .

He sighed. "Long ago I decided that where people appeared to be reasonably intelligent and stable, the thing to do was to tell them the answer, however impossible it seemed. Last year I told a man to go home and beat his wife. I was quite certain, I must admit, that he would never be able to do it. Apparently I was wrong. They're now very happy and contented together."

Wife-beating, incidentally, gets the nod in other science fiction contexts, too: Dr. Mantell, hero of *Discontinuity* (1), knows how to show who is boss:

"I'll make it up, every day of neglect. I promise you I will, darling."

He hit her then sharply and carefully on the point of the chin. She uttered a brief, low cry and sagged back against the sofa.

But to get back to Dr. Hyneker:

He collected together the papers he had dealt out and began to fan them out like a bridge hand. "I do this, for ex-

ample, because I want to pile all these papers together and set fire to the lot. Impossible—by my own decision. So I relieve my feelings by controlling them, destroying their significance, then restoring it."

This unusual display of occupational autotherapy does not lower Dr. Hyneker in his visitors' eyes. What is more, they are right to trust him: Muriel Martin-Lorna Ball is sent to Murrane on the strength of his advice. She manages to solve the riddle of her own disappearance, to recover her identity, to kill the man who had killed her father, to obtain the secret information which guarantees the end of the war, and to return safely to Earth. The story ends on a more, shall we say, peaceful note:

She threw off her dressing-gown and slipped into the pink wrap. It settled on her like a cloud of perfumed mist.

"Come in, Peter," she said.

The concept of "electronic psychiatry" which has the power to destroy and to recreate personalities is of course closely akin to various delusions which we have seen in paranoid schizophrenics with increasing frequency in the last ten years since this tendency has been abetted both by the use of electric machinery in connection with psychiatry and by the intellectual climate of our time in general. As I have pointed out in an earlier paper (3), this similarity is by no means rare in science fiction. By ascribing super-human intelligence and influence to his psychiatrists as well as by bringing in oedipal undertones, the author of *Mind Alone* is in line with the trend. He shows his deep ambivalence by simultaneously using every opportunity to present his electronic psychiatrists as legitimate targets of ridicule, leaving the reader the choice to think that these psychiatrists could do with a dose of therapy themselves, or that the word applies to them which is sometimes used to praise horses or dogs: they are almost human.

The effort to render psychiatry innocuous by making it the butt, or at least the theme, of jokes is also visible in the *fanzines*. This neologism denotes "fan magazines"—

little science fiction magazines, usually mimeographed, which sell (or try to) for about 25 cents a copy; their number is large, their life expectancy low. One of them, called *Psychotic*, consists of such columns as *The Observation Ward*, *The Psycho-Analyst*—these two are more or less book reviews—*The Leather Couch, Section 8*, *The Padded Cell*.

Let us now return to Dr. Mantell whose methods of treating his wife we have observed. They are not his forte. There has been so little marital understanding that Mrs. Mantell has taken a lover who has bashed the doctor's unsuspecting head in.

David Mantell himself lay with a bare speck of life possessing his body. The back of his skull had been crushed and sixty percent of his brain stuff destroyed . . .

a condition in which many patients undoubtedly would like their psychiatrists to find themselves.

Dr. Mantell, however, is not the sort of man who can be kept down that easily. He is saved, indeed restored to greater glory than ever before, by the *Mantell Synthesis*, an operation he had devised. Being a much greater genius than even the electronic psychiatrists, he had

provided the medical world with its most brilliant technique in thirty centuries of its history. . . . With one sweep he eliminated the centuries old butchery of lobotomy and topectomy which had maimed hundreds of thousands in its long fad. Or would have—

For there is one trouble with the *Mantell Synthesis*: It doesn't seem to work.

It also fails to impress Mrs. Mantell the way it should:

He could tear apart the brain of a man, cell by cell, and reconstruct it in the image of a living being. . . . He could show her, he said, the exact cluster of molecules that held his love for her—and that, she thought, was the moment in which she stopped loving him.

His ministrations, incidentally, do not give the appearance of being performed with any greater loving kindness than the personality change wrought in Lorna Ball:

David held the helmet in his hands, its hundred spiny probes a terrible weapon to hurl into a man's face if he had to do it. . . . Carefully, the hundred or more probes, scarcely a dozen molecules in thickness, were screwed down, penetrating the skull and into precise loci of the brain structure . . . It seemed a grim and ugly thing to do . . .

The description of a mental hospital of the future, to which some of Dr. Mantell's patients are sent, is also interesting:

She was located at one of the small, public sanatoriums that had long ago replaced the gray prison houses once used for the mentally sick. . . . Through the heavy shrubbery that hid it he could see the faint, pink glow of the barrier field that fenced the grounds. . . . There was no power on Earth that was known to be capable of breaking through that barrier field—

which does not keep Dr. Mantell and his cohorts from breaking through it anyway, but they are unusual.

Be it they or any of the many other mental patients who appear in science fiction, they all remain essentially alien. Furthermore, while science fiction authors are apt to reject, with a great show of indignation, anything that smacks of shock therapy or brain surgery, they reject psychotherapy no less firmly, though less vocally. There is a certain logic in this: They make the treatment fit the etiology—not to say, the punishment fit the crime. Almost invariably, the cause of mental illness in science fiction is a physical trauma. For example, it is head injury, rather than unsolved marital conflict, which drives Dr. Mantell into the condition that we have seen described and that in the story is diagnosed as schizophrenia.

This reification which is so characteristic of science fiction stories is by no means their unique property. On the contrary, it accords perfectly with a historic change in folk beliefs. Our case histories are full of instances in which the all but unshakeable conviction that disturbing mental phenomena were caused by physical injury is a major obstacle in the path of treatment. And we all have experiences with patients' relatives who, tutored by radio "soap

operas," clamor for X-rays to discover whether their patients' drinking, wife-beating or hallucinating can be explained by "a pressure on the brain"—while their ancestors three hundred years ago, instructed by their preachers, would undoubtedly have looked for the witch that had cast the spell. In either case, mental illness is conceived as being caused by an external agent: It is never believed to be functional. And alienation is expected and found as the outstanding result.

In a recent story for instance (4), Police Lieutenant Riley is infected by an extremely dangerous Venusian virus which the doctors, upon the advice of his erstwhile friend Harper, counteract by injecting him with meningoecocci. The result is "insanity." This is verbatim the diagnosis given in the story, and the syndrome is described thus:

Harper looked. Inside, clad only in socks and pants, Riley sat aimlessly on the edge of the bed.

. . . Harper went there, gazed in . . . something inside him gave way and he growled, "They're better off dead. Do you hear me? They have minds like porridge, all messed up to hell, and they're better off dead."

This perhaps reflects the author's childhood impression of porridge rather than his hero's considered opinion of psychosis. Still,

Riley was away in a big house in the country, helping with the gardening, doing petty chores, smiling at chirping sparrows, being gently led to his bedroom when sleepy time came. Like all the others, a little child. He would never be any different. Never, never, never.

The ambivalence of the science fiction writers toward psychiatry thus causes them to cover the widest possible range in estimating the psychiatrist's helping power—from the one extreme, the virtual omnipotence which can be used for good or evil, to the other, impotence. For what that reverberating "never" echoes is the belief that no psychiatrist can be expected to effect a cure, not even in the wonderland of the future.

Many people, when first faced with science fiction, respond with the only half jocular comment that these authors ought to go and see a psychiatrist. Closer acquaintance makes one wonder whether they have not actually done just that. There is a peculiar combination of irresistible attraction to psychiatry, glib familiarity with the lingo, blocking of real insight, vacillation between over- and under-estimation of the potentialities of psychiatry, and poorly disguised fear of suffering a final break and being "put away."

The question arises which individuals other than science fiction authors display any or all of these attitudes. Professionals, such as psychiatrists, psychiatric social workers, psychologists, would of course have the knowledge and interest in the field to write stories involving psychopathology; but the style and philosophy of these particular stories clearly reveal the amateur hand. Who might these amateurs be?

The question what people outside of our professions are apt to dabble in them for a hobby is an absorbing one. By drawing on commonplace observations from our practice, we can note that we come across a somewhat similar cluster of attitudes in a type of person whom we encounter with a fair degree of frequency: namely the person who has tasted the fruits of psychiatry and has found them bitter; particularly the patient who has started psychotherapy and has prematurely discontinued it. To find out whether this is perhaps indeed the situation of a significant number of science fiction authors would be an interesting research project. It would also be unusually difficult to set it up.

All that we can depend on at this juncture is the material that we can glean from the published stories, i.e. fantasies, of these writers. The reminder is perhaps in order that while our study here can only pick a few, these are representative. The material is large and remarkably homogeneous. What can it teach us?

Modern psychiatry and psychology — any science influenced by Freud — employs a particular method of gathering facts from individuals: Unintentional communications are given at least equal weight with those that serve a con-

scious purpose. Science fiction writers do not as a rule intend to disclose their deeper feelings about psychotherapy. The same, incidentally, is true of other cathected areas, such as their view of the opposite sex, or their religion. Their conscious "message" is concerned with more neutral fields. The attitudes on emotionally significant subjects are unintentionally revealed.

They are, as far as our topic is concerned, made up of these principal elements: Reification and externalization of the causes and cures of emotional illness; resistance to meaningful treatment; extreme ambivalence toward the person who administers it, often with the flavor of a very strong transference that oscillates between the positive and the negative. These appear to be the same factors that help to form the attitudes of a very wide segment of the population with which we deal. These factors may, however, enter into different combinations; and the special pattern that we have observed is ubiquitous in science fiction—and perhaps with ex-patients—but may be rather rare outside of these two categories.

The main difference and probably the reason for the specificity of the pattern is that science fiction is more articulate and less hampered by ordinary restraint than either most of our patients or most of the writers in other fields of literature. This is what gives these bizarre productions their peculiar interest: They are a manifestation of "discontent in civilization"—i.e., in the American civilization of the middle of the twentieth century. At the same time, they say things which many of our patients have perhaps tried to tell us, in their more awkward manner, all along.

2387 Overlook Rd.
Cleveland 6, Ohio

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To Tame a Fox

by

Robert A. Rosenthal

TAMING A FOX

"It was then that the fox appeared.

'Good morning,' said the fox.

'Good morning,' the little prince responded politely, although when he turned around he saw nothing.

'I am right here,' the voice said, 'under the apple tree.'

'Who are you?' asked the little prince, and added, 'You are very pretty to look at.'

'I am a fox,' the fox said.

'Come and play with me,' proposed the little prince. 'I am so unhappy.'

'I cannot play with you,' the fox said. 'I am not tamed.'

'Ah! Please excuse me,' said the little prince.

But, after some thought, he added:

'What does that mean—"tame"?"'

(19, pp. 64-5)

For the next few moments, though the little prince persisted in his questioning, the fox made no answer; he was too preoccupied with finding out whether or not there were chickens and hunters on the planet over which the little

From the Department of Psychology, University of Michigan.

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prince was princee. However, this fox was a very unusual fox. Besides being drawn incorrectly by the author, he was 1) psychoanalytically sophisticated, and, 2) he wanted to be tamed. Thus it is not surprising that he finally endeavored to answer the question of the little prince: "What does that mean—'tame'?" Since this question has significance for others than foxes and small princes, it might be well to follow the fox a bit longer and see how he defines his terms.

First of all, it must be remembered that the fox spoke usually in French, and that in French the word for 'tame' is 'apprivoiser.' The *Concise Oxford French Dictionary* (1954) tells us that 'apprivoiser' means:

"to tame; to make (persons) tractable, sociable;
s'apprivoiser—to grow tame; to grow accustomed
to; (fam. of persons) to thaw. *S'apprivoiser avec
le danger*—to become familiar with danger."

The first approximation to a definition the fox himself gives is that taming is "an act too often neglected . . . it means to establish ties." He further elucidated the nature of these ties:

" 'I do not eat bread. Wheat is of no use to me. The wheat fields have nothing to say to me. And that is sad. But you have hair that is the color of gold. Think how wonderful that will be when you have tamed me! The grain, which is also golden, will bring me back the thought of you and I shall love to listen to the wind in the wheat.'

The fox gazed at the little prince for a long time.

'Please tame me!' he said.

'I want to very much,' the little prince replied. 'But I have not much time. I have friends to discover and a great many things to understand.'

'One only understands the things one tames,' said the fox." (19, p. 67)

From this and the preceding passages, we can see that the fox has specified three things that are involved in the notion of taming: that you cannot play with anyone whom you haven't tamed; that taming involves the making of connections; third, that understanding is involved in the notion of taming. Another statement can be derived from the last quoted passage and the paragraph just following it in the book: that the connections made function as cues which lead one to anticipate the coming of that which one has tamed.

"So the little prince tamed the fox. And when the hour of departure grew near—

'Ah,' said the fox, 'I shall cry.'

'It is your own fault,' said the little prince. 'I never wished you any sort of harm; but you wanted me to tame you. . . .'

'Yes, that is so,' said the fox.

'But now you are going to cry,' said the little prince.

'Yes, that is so,' said the fox.

'Then it has done you no good at all!' said the little prince.

'It has done me good,' said the fox, 'because of the color of the wheat fields.' " (19, p. 68)

Taming, then, as seen by the fox does not preclude sadness. Perhaps the most successful kinds of taming have a little sadness mixed in.

The last poignant meeting between the little prince and the fox produced an important admonition on the part of the fox—which the prince did not easily understand, so that he had to repeat it to himself: " 'You become responsible, forever, for what you have tamed.' " And so, the fifth statement regarding taming is that you cannot escape responsibility for what you have tamed.

We will return to these statements below, and be concerned with them at length. But it is only fair now to give

the grownup reader some idea of why I put to his mind this notion of taming.

TAMING A BEAR

This might better be accomplished by changing the nature of the animal from a fox, which cannot really frighten us, to a more ferocious animal, a bear. You may want to tame a bear for various reasons. First of all, a bear is a wild, untamed animal that may eat or hurt you, or, at least, whose rumblings in the hedge outside your cottage might make you justifiably edgy. Secondly, if you don't want to kill him, or can't, but yet must contend with him, he may be able to be of some use to you, provide you with pleasure, perhaps. To tame him, you must first contrive it that he can not get at you and devour you. You also need, as in animal experimentation, to establish connections between his method of satisfying hunger, and some object besides you which it will please him to eat. When you have tamed him finally, and have trained him to, say, ride a velocipede, he is yours. You are his master; you might want him to perform for your friends, and, possibly, when they have gone you may ask him to go once more around the ring for your private benefit. The pleasure that people get from watching trained bears is undoubtedly contingent on their constant awareness that the animal riding the velocipede is a bear and that bears are ordinarily ferocious animals which do not ride velocipedes.

In the sense that taming makes handleable wild and threatening animals, and thus relieves anxiety, taming might be called a mechanism of defense or a complex of defense mechanisms. In the sense that the pleasure, or resolution of conflict achieved through taming depends somewhat on the recognition of the past and present threateningness of these animals, taming seems to me a special case of defense mechanism, one which does not, in many of its manifestations, depend on repression of the unpleasant reality causing the anxiety.

To examine the operation of this mechanism, imagine you are having a dinner party. Because an academic salary

necessitates your living in a small apartment with little room in which to clearly separate functions, you have to keep the bear in your living room (which is also the dining room). The bear, excited and hungry, restlessly paces up and down his cage. He spots a loose bar and proceeds to lumber out. You are startled; your guests panic. Then you recover, and say, "Ah, but he is a trained bear. Come, bear, on your velocipede now." This the bear does to the relief and subsequent delight of all.

It is not always anything so clear cut as a bear that you must tame. The anecdote of the Little Prince and the Pill Merchant indicates a subtler process.

TAMING THE PILL MERCHANT

" 'Good morning,' said the little prince.

'Good morning,' said the merchant.

This was a merchant who sold pills that had been invented to quench thirst. You need only swallow one pill a week, and you would feel no need of anything to drink.

'Why are you selling those?' asked the little prince.

'Because they save a tremendous amount of time,' said the merchant. 'Computations have been made by experts. With those pills, you save fifty-three minutes in every week!'

'And what do you do with those fifty-three minutes?'

'As for me,' said the little prince to himself, 'if I had fifty-three minutes to spend as I liked, I should walk at my leisure toward a spring of fresh water.' " (19, pp. 73-4)

We might not laugh at this anecdote; it may be too lovely for laughter. But we do smile, and because it seems to us to be of high humor we would do well here to examine the factors which make it humorous. The book is written in a style that can be called naive. Though we may smile

at things the little prince says, the little prince himself is not a humorist. On the contrary, he is a serious and tragic young man. The quality of his humor derives from the fact that he is "using his thoughts and expressions in a simple and normal manner; he has no other purpose in view and derives no pleasure from his naive production." (8, p. 765). However we laugh because we know something additional, employ other frames of reference, and we realize that for one of us jaded adults to speak as the little prince did we would have to radically adjust those frames of reference.

What is the little prince, in his innocence, doing for us? He is attacking grown-ups for all the seriousness with which they go about defeating their own purposes, and blocking the satisfaction of their truest needs. He is showing how really clumsy grown-ups are, and thus exposes them for being confused as children in the methods by which they convince themselves that they are solving their problems. Further, he is saying that there is something in the wide world more important than what they are concerned with. In a sense he is resolving the incomprehensibility of grown-ups by putting them in their place. It does not seem unreasonable to say that he is taming grown-ups and, moreover, taming their view of the world. When we appreciate this anecdote we also may be said to be taming something in ourselves (the terrible and disproportionate hold that minutes have over us) in favor of a gentler order.

FREUD, THE FOX, AND THE FIVE PRINCIPLES OF TAMING

It is obvious that I have been trying some taming myself—at least in the sense of establishing connections. There is, I think, a connection between humor and taming, and, more specifically, between taming and the psychoanalytically oriented theories of humor.

Freud, who must be rated the most formidable raconteur of our times, wrote at length on humor.

"Humor can now be conceived as the loftiest of

these defense functions. It disdains to withdraw from conscious attention the ideas which are connected with the painful affect, as repression does, and it, thus, overcomes the defense automatism. It brings this about by finding the means to withdraw the energy from the ready held pain release, and through discharge changes the same into pleasure. It is even credible that this connection with the infantile . . . puts at humor's disposal the means for this function. Only in childhood did we experience intensely painful affects over which today as grown-ups we would laugh, just as a humorist laughs over his own present painful affects. The elevation of his ego which is evidenced by the humoristic displacement—the translation of which would nevertheless read: I am too big to have these causes affect me painfully—he could find in the comparison of his present ego with his infantile ego. This conception is to some extent confirmed by the role which falls to the infantile in the neurotic processes of repression." (8, pp. 201-2) (1)

Freud recognized the complexity of the comic. Throughout his writing he is constantly reminding us of this complexity and presenting examples he could not classify. When I first decided to use the notion of taming in order to relate humor to anxiety I had not yet read Freud on this subject and so was frankly surprised at the parallel. I have tried to use the analogy to provide a conceptual matrix in which

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1. The differentiation Freud makes between humor and other forms of the comic will be ignored in this paper for "humor may appear fused with wit or any other form of the comic" so long as it accomplishes a translation of an unpleasant or prohibited affect into a more pleasurable affect with a minimum of repression. Though the present paper springs from an analytic conception of humor, it seeks to avoid abuse of this subject through reduction of the dynamics involved to only one factor, as has been done too often before.

humoristic productions can be examined without distortion or the loss of their distinctiveness.

The five principles of taming and their Freudian counterparts:

1. *Fox*: You only understand what you have tamed.
Freud: By a process of displacement (structurally related to detachment or intellectualization) troublesome affect is made less threatening. Here the emphasis is on the relationship of the original feeling to the resultant affect.
Concept: *Nature of displaced affect*.
2. *Fox*: Taming involves the setting up of expectations.
Freud: In the analytic conception of the comic, the diminution of the anxious expectation of an unpleasant affect corresponds to the release of tension central to classical theories of humor. (In phrases such as "anxiety-producing affects," the usage of "affect" is similar to Fenichel's, meaning really a "tendency toward affect.")
Concept: *Expectation*.
3. *Fox*: You cannot play with anyone you have not tamed.
Freud: Unless the anxiety producing affects are made manageable, the ego is vulnerable to the strain of repression or the pain consequent to expression. Here the emphasis is on the relationship between the threatening impulse and the ego.
Concept: *Vulnerability and Mastery*.
4. *Fox*: Taming is the establishment of connections, such as between hair and wheat, laughter and stars.
Freud: The kinds of connections established in humor represent some form of regression to an infantile level of perception. (Perhaps we can ultimately interpret this to signify an analogy between the primary process and the humoristic process in the sense that both processes transcend the logic of categories and depend more on the perceived similarity of physiognomic qualities.)
Concept: *Regression*.
5. *Fox*: a) The fact that you have tamed someone, and

that the purpose of taming is pleasure, does not preclude your crying.

b) You are responsible, forever, for what you have tamed. *Freud*: "The simpler function . . . of humor results in that humor which smiles under its tears." (8, p. 801). There is neither repression of the negative affect, nor, in the strictest sense, denial of the unpleasant reality. Freud's wisecracking gallows-bird escapes nothing; though smiling, he is sad; though free, still responsible to the reality principle.

Concept: *Repression*.

For the rest of this paper I shall be concerned with the establishment of the status and implications of these five concepts. Some ways of classifying humoristic productions will be discussed and examples from these categories used for later clarification of the concepts. A common way of talking about humor involves classifying content in one of three ways—as to *type* of humorous behavior, *response* to humor, and *motive* or impulse behind the production. In the first category one would put specific types of activities—teasing, taunting, caricature, buffoonery. I shall deal with the latter at length. In the second category one would examine verbs referring to response such as "laughing," "enjoying," "admiring." In a paper on the expressive function of laughter (12) Kris explores the nature of the response to humor. However I find the problem of response logically too complex and empirically too elusive to lend itself to adequate treatment in a paper of the present scope. In the third category one could speak of the affect or wish expressed, possibly with reference to the real object (or homunculus of the psychic anatomy) that was being tamed. In this connection I will treat humor as a response to aggressive, sexual, and other anxiety-provoking feelings.

BUFFOONERY

A buffoon, according to *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary* (1949), is a fellow "who makes a business of amusing

others by tricks, ludicrous gestures, etc.; a clown."

In the purest form of buffoonery we have the jester or buffoon dressed in colorful, grotesque apparel which usually includes bells, rattles, and odd vocables. He usually employs gross bodily activities which can hardly be mistaken for normal human doings, which are in a real sense mockeries of man. The most economical and impressive excursion into the psychodynamics of the "pure buffoon" was made by the artist Paul Klee in the lithograph called *Narretei* or "Buffoonery." A grotesque creature, all hands, is leaping into the air, his legs spread wide apart. As we often find in the drawings of someone diagnosed as psychotic, something is peculiar about the human figure. Instead of there being just the crotch of the subject's pants, we see between the legs the telescoped figure of a complacent burgher, staring guilelessly, smiling stupidly into space. His portly shoulders form the testicles of the buffoon, from which abbreviated legs project, and the short stump which looks like the beginnings of a necktie is, in fact, the flaccid penis of the buffoon.

According to psychoanalytic theory, buffoonery is akin to the "exposing" behavior of the small child who pulls down his pants in the elevator. The burgher wishes to exhibit himself in this most infantile sense of the word. Because exhibitionism of that sort is frowned upon by the stuffy mores of his class, he must disguise it if he is to gratify his desire at all. By making himself look ridiculous in the eyes of his fellows (buffoonery always needs an audience), and by pleasing them through his antics, he escapes the social inhibition; by degrading himself, and, as the analyst says, affording the super-ego "sadistic" pleasure, he sneaks his pregenital ego as it were, under the circus tent, and into the main ring. The source of the pleasure we derive from looking at the lithograph seems to lie in the comparison of which Freud often speaks—of the infantile and present ego, here condensed into one sublimely ridiculous image.

Unfortunately for our analysis, all instances of buffoonery cannot be spoken of as exhibitionism rationalized

through masochism. It is true that the essential factor is exhibitionism, but the elements being exhibited and the motives for the exhibition need not be similar.

Buffoonery may be a way of expressing aggression, in which case invulnerability of the agent may be secured, not by self-deprecation, but by, for example, the social status provided for his role. Miller and Dollard (2, p. 184) give the example of the Ashanti court jester.

"This person, usually a dwarf or hunchback, is permitted to make fun even of the king himself, to the obvious enjoyment of the natives. It is obligatory, therefore, to tell a blood relative if anyone has slandered him or done anything to his detriment. A nephew, in particular, must tell his maternal uncle if anything of the sort happens. This seems calculated to give some individuals an outlet for their aggression as well as to afford a means of consolidating the bonds of the blood group."

If masochism is operant in this type of situation, it might figure in the selection of the buffoon, rather than in his buffoonery, i.e., the people might choose him because his deformity represents a punishment, and therefore enables him to do with impunity what normal men are prohibited from doing.

Another way buffoonery may operate is in the "exposure" of certain attributes in order to draw the viewer's attention away from other attributes, perception of which might render a person vulnerable to harm or loss of self esteem. I know of a man who escaped the Nazis by "playing the fool" and seeming so ludicrous that the S.S. did not imagine him capable of doing underground work. Two things are being disguised here: the fear of being exposed (which is defended against by "exposure" of misleading attributes), and the wish to commit an aggressive act. His reasoning was that he might be more easily detected if he tried to be inconspicuous—for his overt anxiety was so great he was almost incapable of nonchalant activity. Thus he

sought to hide the physical manifestations of his anxiety by imbedding them in a veneer of clumsiness.

A more common form of exposure-to-prevent-exposure is often seen among second-rate vaudevillians. A juggler who drops an orange and get heckled for it may systematically make other brutish mistakes until he has so interwoven the first, unintentional mistake into a network of contrived blunders, that the audience is duped into thinking the whole series was the clever machination of a master juggler. In this instance the confidence the juggler possesses in his own mastery, the knowledge that his pretense at failure will be perceived as pretense and no more, works to calm him. His smile, if it is sincere, seems to be the result of both the release of tension and the reestablishment of mastery.

Often a mistake, rather than necessitating concealment, provides an excuse for further exhibitionism, or the expression of hostility. In the first case one might imagine a World War I veteran at the American Legion convention, whose attempts at verbal humor have failed, taking a pratfall or letting his pants drop for a moment. His mistake and the discomfort it caused him could function as just the sort of punishment necessary to allow him to express more blatantly the underlying wish, namely, to expose himself.

The second situation arises most often in the humor of sabre-tooth repartee, the sort in which Bob Hope and Groucho Marx indulge themselves. When one of them "lays an egg" he often either derides himself or makes a humorous thrust at the audience, like "I thought this was the Masonic Temple, not the morgue." The initial exposure made was when he ventured a joke. When the joke fell flat, the cover afforded him by his role as a comic left him, and he stood before the audience more exposed than was comfortable. The anxiety he felt expressed itself as bald aggression, much as if the gentle crack of the whip was too faint for our trained bear and he started pawing the nearest guest.

An interesting example of buffoonery occurs in a paper (17) by Dr. Annie Reich. Dr. Reich speaks of a girl, Catherine, a lovely and talented young lady who was given to

imitating, very convincingly, though with marked exaggeration, the behavior of all manner of poor, distorted, and jaded women whom she chanced to meet, to the amusement (and eventual distress) of those close to her. Analysis revealed that she had an irrational fear of being deformed, and that her grotesque acting out of this fear provided the only means she knew of maintaining herself. The interpretation given by Reich is that Catherine was appealing to her public to "love me as I am, though I be deformed and ugly." Something else is being tamed by her buffoonery besides her fear of deformation—her fear of rejection. In so far as she asks the audience to love her for the deformed creature she might be, she is leaving herself open to rejection. The anxiety produced by the fear of rejection is itself tamed by her buffoonery; she relieves the uncertainty of rejection by creating a situation in which rejection is inevitable and, by provoking, conquers it.

The last example of buffoonery to be treated is, like some of the above, not usually treated as buffoonery, but seems properly to be one of its varieties. In one of its most melodramatic forms, a crippled young boy is about to take his first steps since the Operation. However, in order to give him courage, a Famous Track Star, the boy's pre-accident ideal, has been persuaded to come and cheer him on. The child takes some few faltering steps and then falls down, commencing to bite his lower lip and suppress the sobs. The Track Star, who has been following the boy, all of a sudden falls flat on his face in a clutter of gangling arms and legs. He laughs; the boy, too, laughs. The Track Star's behavior was as if to say: "Look, son, I am a Famous Tack Star, and even I fall down sometimes." It is buffoonery because it is a ridiculous set of motions designed to attract attention to something, to evoke laughter or derision, and to tame some kind of unpleasant affect. However, what makes this form of buffoonery noteworthy is that the Track Star is not taming anything in himself, but he is taming the anxieties of the boy, telling him that he is not unique in

falling, and that falling does not necessarily connote a lack of mastery over one's body.

Eight cases of buffoonery have been presented. When we consider what it is that the buffoon exposes, what affect he must deal with, we find that buffoonery is more complicated than the lithograph of Klee, or previous theorizing, suggested. We have seen that the buffoon may be dealing with wishes to expose himself, aggressive wishes, or his own anxiety, however it arises. As in the case of the Track Star he may be taming the fear of another. It is suggested that the analysis of other types of humoristic behavior will reveal similar complexity, necessitating a more flexible critical approach rather than the reductionistic approaches characterizing much of the present literature.

TAMING AGGRESSION

It is possible that you want to use the bear you have tamed for some nefarious purpose. Perhaps like Poe's ape in "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" he will do evil things to young ladies. Of course you do not want to get caught, otherwise you would not need to use the bear. There are several ways you can escape responsibility for the bear's pranks: you can say "Bear? What bear?" and thus disclaim ownership (displacement of agent); you can say "My bear? Couldn't be guilty. He was home riding his velocipede all afternoon" (displacement of act); you can say "Ah, but my bear wasn't chasing *you*. He *likes* you. He was chasing the Pill Merchant, who just happens to look like *you*" (displacement of object).

Martha Wolfenstein, in an excellent and intensive study of children's humor, gives innumerable charming examples of how children get around the responsibility for aggressive humor, some of which I have assimilated into this section.

Displacement of agent can be achieved in a variety of manners.

i. By telling a humorous and derogatory "prefabricated" story (i.e., by repeating something which exists independently of the agent) you can not be held responsible.

You are the passive teller of a known phrase or joke. Thus agent invulnerability is secured in the phrase "No more classes, no more books, no more teacher's dirty looks."

ii. Using a rhyming joke in which the sound of the word with which the others are to be rhymed limits the choice of rhymes so that you may consider yourself "forced" to make a derogatory rhyming close. "Baby! Baby! Stick your head in gravy!"

iii. Often, with the use of familiar phrases or slogans, displacement of object is achieved by making the object a class or stereotype, displacement of agent through identification with other agents so that individual responsibility is lost in the crowd. A common form requires the use of a phrase, original or vernacular, which is attractive to other children so that they join with you in taunting the object. When I was a child we used to heckle Crazy Mary as she walked up the big hill with a wagonload of old newspapers: "Old Mother Morey! Tell us a story!"

iv. Finding a "rule" enables the agent to claim immunity on the grounds that he was only following instructions. I once saw a small boy employing this gambit in the London tubes, where all exits are marked "WAY OUT." He was vehemently pushing at some grown-ups ahead of him, hollering loudly "WAY OUT! THIS WAY OUT!" In an operation similar to that by which the paranoid must obey the will of God, or the catatonic seeks cues in his environment which will "tell him" what to do, the child achieves immunity by a mock surrender of volition.

v. In the previous examples, the agent has uttered the humorous-sadistic remark. In the following—a supremely diabolical contrivance of the child's mind—the agent forces his victim to punish himself: "Adam and Eve and Pinch-me were sitting on a raft. Adam and Eve fell off. Who was left?" The victim replies unwittingly "Pinch-me?" and is instantaneously obliged. It cannot be the baiter's fault; he has been a good boy, desiring only to please his victim. Without too much distortion we can see an aggressive "table-turning" in the example. Adam and

Eve may have originally meant mother and father. They are sitting on the bed with little "Pinch-me," a poor, unwanted child whose name (as Wolfenstein states) implies the parents' attitude towards him. In the real life situation the parents dismiss the child, but in the humorous version mother and father are rudely dispensed with or repressed by the triumphant child, who now has the bed to himself. Of course this is not to suggest that the child has these feelings when telling this anecdote; it is only a hypothesis to account for the particular form of the joke. (2)

vi. The Hamanesque extreme of the displacement gradient has the victim not only permitting the punishment, but proclaiming his own sentence, or slandering himself. We see this quite often in book reviewing and theater reviewing, where by a judicious selection of data, a reviewer may expose an author's absurdities. His hostile forays and the exposing behavior of the Ashanti buffoon may be quite similar in that they both "expose" the victim by a precis in which certain proportions are readjusted. Since the reviewer separates himself from his victim rather than utilizing his own body (which seems to be the case in most instances of buffoonery), humorous-deprecatory reviewing resembles caricature more than it does buffoonery.

The above technique is not, unfortunately, limited to children and reviewers. It prevails in adult parlor games as an enforced, rarely resisted masochism. "Repeat after me the Siamese Goose Call. OWA TAGOO SIAM." Victim: "Oh, what a goose I am." Both the perpetrator and recipient of this foolishness may receive pleasure in the exchange. The perpetrator gets sadistic pleasure from making someone look foolish, and escapes unpunished; the victim

2. This suggestion does not seem in conflict with Wolfenstein's remark that the child punishes the victim for being too "eager to show knowledge," much as he himself is punished for similar behavior. She interprets the reversal, the "fall" of Adam and Eve, as punishment (by the child) analogous to that suffered by the original Adam and Eve consequent to their attempt to secure forbidden knowledge. (21, p. 115)

can rationalize his exhibitionism on the grounds that it was forced.

DISPLACEMENT OF ACT

Displacement of the act in aggressive humor seems a simpler process. It works in only one way—to disguise the hostile implication in fabric that will at first be taken to be innocent, as in the venom-dipped petit-point of Mme. Du-farge. Its essence is ambiguity, its manifestations sarcasm, innuendo, and "dry" wit. When Hamlet speaks to Ophelia of "country matters" (i.e., "to lie between a maid's legs"), it is our predilection for obscenity, not Hamlet's or naive Ophelia's, that converts a statement concerning "rustic subjects" into an aggressively sexual suggestion.

DISPLACEMENT OF OBJECT

The categories are not mutually exclusive. Displacement of the object alone can be accomplished in a variety of manners, but many of the examples treated under the topic of displacement of agent achieve object-displacement as well. Familiar rhymes, "canned" jokes, riddles, often refer to nonspecific objects ("people," for example), classes of objects (teachers), or objects which may resemble the proper object only in some minor, obscure, or irrelevant way.

i. Examples of the latter, where the joke is directed towards an object identifiable with the proper object in a minor way, are found quite often in the negative transferrence stages of analysis, as Grotjahn (11) points out. With respect to aggressive contents, we might find a patient telling his analyst, Dr. Stein, an anecdote about the stone heads discovered on Easter Island, thereby displacing the object not only to a different class (stressing what the patient perceives to be the impassivity and stupidity of the analyst) but to a place thousands of miles away. A more obscure displacement, of the type one can observe in the aggressive—"humoristic" productions of the paranoid, would be achieved by remarking to the doctor something about the exorbitantly high price of furniture nowadays, especially couches.

ii. The object may be apparently displaced to the agent (Wolfenstein's "I attack myself" category). The Ashanti buffoon's elephantine dance evokes the pomposity of his king, though the actual object of ridicule is his own body.

ii. The object may be displaced to one of a number of agents. Two adolescents walk past a rookie policeman. They speak only to each other though they may be staring at him. "Does your father work?" "No, he's a cop."

This is perhaps the classical example of taunting. The individual, jeered at, ridiculed, derided by the two, is provoked to aggression, or revulsion and withdrawal. He is "dared" to perform an act which superficially looks like it would be a *response* to the taunting. But the remark was not really directed towards him. Any response performed by him will be viewed as a spontaneous and voluntary act, not as a response at all. By denying the policeman as object they can reject any action by him in response to them and force him to either withdraw, or initiate an interaction, assuming all responsibility. Another aspect of displacement follows this: since any act becomes spontaneous, the taunters escape guilt and render themselves invulnerable to punishment as such. Thus they reject the efficacy of the policeman as agent.

If I may be permitted to slip back into the previous category (ii), the aggressive aspect of Catherine's behavior (p. 13) may become clearer. She is a taunter also. Catherine taunts the world to reject her; she makes believe that it is her object. But even if those who knew her responded thusly, it could have no effect. For, in controlling the rejection herself, she has denied the world as agent and the world as object.

TAMING AND PSYCHOSEXUAL DEVELOPMENT

Martha Wolfenstein's book provides us with a wealth of data showing humor as it is used to tame troublesome affects in children.

i. Oral sadism: A favorite joke in any one of the

Protean forms in which it occurs, is the "Shut-up, Trouble" joke.

A child named "Shut-up" is awaiting on the street corner for his friend, "Trouble." A policeman happens along, and, as policemen (and parents) are wont to do, asks the child bothersome questions. "What's your name, son?" The child, always a good boy, trained to obey authority unquestioningly, replies gleefully, "Shut-up!" To which the policeman replies, "Are you looking for trouble?" "That's right," Shut-up says, "and he's just around the corner." Besides the taming of authority not very well concealed here, the child accomplishes a reversal of roles like we saw in the anecdote of the little prince and the Pill Merchant and the "Adam and Eve and Pinch-me" story. Any child the age of Trouble has heard his father or mother telling him to keep quiet and stop "pestering" them. And he has heard dicta to the effect that talking too much, as with listening too much, will get him into trouble. When the child says "Shut-up!" to the policeman "implicitly he is only repeating the bad name that has been given him." The child's dilemma is aptly summarized by Dr. Wolfenstein: "The rebellious and critical child feels that adults indulge their hostility against him while demanding that he inhibit the corresponding feelings in himself." (21, p. 87)

ii. Anality: Two examples will be given here, the first a reversal-of-roles joke from Wolfenstein (22, p. 178), the second involving displacement of agent.

The most common and probably the earliest occurrence of anal expulsiveness in children's humor is in the use of aggressive epithets such as "Mr. Poo-poo." In a more sophisticated version the object is displaced to the hero, and roles are reversed. The hero's name may be "Heinie," "Toochas" or "Tooshie" in Jewish groups, "Prat"—or more directly, "Behind." The anal element may be disguised further in a name like "Molasses." A mother has been walking with her child "Tooshie." As a sudden shower has drenched both of them, the mother seeks refuge in a drug store. Thinking first of her child, she asks the clerk,

"May I please have some toilet paper to wipe my Tooshie?" (22, p. 178). Besides the gain of pleasure through the pronouncing of a forbidden word, magically almost equivalent to the commitment of the act, these jokes function to tame adults by forcing them to use that word and thus tacitly admit that they, too, possess that fascinating orifice.

The anal joke may be rigged so that the forbidden behavior is committed by the victim. Another child is asked to repeat "Polish it in the corner" as fast and as many times as he can, with the result, when the laughter of those around him makes him aware of the fact, that he has indeed symbolically defecated in the corner.

iii. Genitality. Michael, age five, the caretaker's child, was telling me riddles one afternoon, and told one which seems a very primitive genital joke. "What did the table say to the chair?" he asked me. Since I had not been able to anticipate any of the previous punch-lines, I replied in the smallest voice audible, "I don't know." "Let's get together, of course!" said Michael, doubling over with laughter and running into the back yard.

The expression of sexual affects in jokes is a complex subject, in which the depth of concealment ranges from the innuendo (in which a man walks into a hardware store and asks for a screw)—to the overtly obscene joke (e.g., the man whose penis was so long he painted the tip red and used it for a flower in his buttonhole, which flower his girl sniffs in a restaurant, whereupon a lady at the other end of the restaurant cries out, "Who put the cream in my coffee?"). When the sexual content is so obvious, taming is often accomplished by exaggerating the size of taboo organs until they are tunnel-deep, tower-tall, and thus ridiculously ineffectual.

Rene Clair's motion picture *Beauties of the Night* provides us with an hilarious example of a different way of handling sexual material: voluptuous dream scene in which Gerard Philippe makes love in a harem to Gina Lollobrigida is broken up when the door to the 19th century harem opens cautiously and we see Philippe's closest real-life friend, a

20th century garage mechanic dressed in his working clothes, enter timorously, cap in hand. Of course he is really entering our sleeping hero's bedroom, but somehow wandered into the dream. Though he was profoundly embarrassed and walked rather clumsily backwards out of the room, the drab reality he represented was sufficient to remind the audience that these forbidden and exotic pleasures were only being fantasied, and reduce their sexual involvement by stressing the absurdity of the situation.

The class represented by the above anecdote is characterized by the construction of situations in which a forbidden wish is granted and then tamed either by the intrusion of the reality principle, or the absurd consequences of the gratified wish. Since the wish can not be fulfilled in reality, it is mocked.

In the children's riddle of General Custer reality has a slightly different role. "What did General Custer say when he saw the Indians coming?" Answer: "The Indians are coming." The Indians represent violent and peculiarly sadistic threats, especially the possibility of castration. To say merely "Oh, nothing to worry about, it's only the Indians coming" is to recognize the reality of the situation without needing to verbalize what it is the Indians are coming to do. The child may have been at once afraid of the Indians, vicariously participating in their wanton destructiveness, and strongly identifying with the implacable general, whose aloofness is not so much a rejection of reality but a statement of mastery in the face of real danger.

TAMING FEAR, ANXIETY

The typical case of the employment of humor to reduce anxiety arises when the object is vague and unspecified. Walking through a cemetery, crouching in the bottom of an LSM boat before an invasion, talking with the other speakers before reading a paper, all of these situations can give rise to a kind of grim humor, distantly related to *Galgenhumor*. It can as easily engender a defensive infantile mockery which manifests itself in deprecatory remarks or nervous laughter.

One sees this especially in horror shows or sentimental love films. The audience is apparently unable to deal with the affective content on its own terms and tames it by mockery. The mere act of doing something, making a verbalization or guttural of any sort, reduces the threat by concretization, specification, and the formalizing of expectations (cf. case of Catherine). An example might clarify this. One of the first intentionally humorous interactions a parent indulges in with a child is the game of peek-a-boo. The mother hides her face behind her hands, pops out on the right side, then on the left, hides again, and so on until one of them gets distracted or exhausted. What is operating to make the child laugh? There may be two important factors involved. Analytic theory might hold that the response was a reaction to and attempt at mastery of the fear that the loved object will not appear again, will be lost forever, and that the child will be left alone and abandoned. When the cathected object reappears, laughter which till then served to tame anxiety is now mixed with the laughter of delight. Related to this is the possibility that the child may be revelling in his growing power to control his own experience by the imposition of a cause and effect relation on his buzzing world, by the playing at prediction and the successful outcome of the prediction. However, the fact that one can play a form of peek-a-boo with a child which involves hiding and exposing some other object than one's head, such as a rattle, or toy, suggests to me that the second factor may at times operate independent of the first, or at least that the degree of cathexis may be much less than that involved when the object is the mother. Perhaps the idea of possible loss is always present, but when the object has never previously been cathected, or when it gains its importance because of the game, it is the second factor, that of the confirmation of expectations, which predominates (see p. 33). At any rate, teasing seems to be based on a type of tantalization where tension is built up and spasmodically, but never completely, discharged, through giggling or laughing. The pleasure obtained is a frustration-tolerance phenomenon because the child is willing to stand

the disappearance of his mother, the rattle, or the toy, only on the "understanding" that, after a certain number of trials, his desire for the object will be satisfied and his prediction that it will come be fulfilled. If we overestimate his threshold, laughter changes to tears, delight to petulance.

TAMING HITLER AND FREUD

In his definitive study of caricature, Kris (15) links caricature with sympathetic magic. By altering the representation of someone or something the caricaturist seeks to magically alter the object itself and also reduce its threat to him. He gains sanctuary from his proximity to art; you may see him hanging gargoyle-like from the battlements of *Le Figaro*, *Punch*, or *Krokodil*, shooting darts at passersby. But what is the nature and purpose of these darts? Are there sugar-tipped missiles among the ones dipped in curare?

If the caricaturist draws Hitler, making him all mustache and hanging forelock, he may be using a form of sympathetic magic to tame an actual threatening personage. "Why be afraid of him? Can't you see he has hardly any features outside of that idiotic coiffure?" The caricaturist is exposing certain qualities of an object and, by exaggeration, ridiculing them. In that respect he is a kinsman of the buffoon, except, as previously stated, his object is separate from his body, and his invulnerability is secured from another source. Diminution may work similar magic. The caricaturist could draw Hitler as a very small man with a mustache far too large for him, and show him trying to balance himself on an even tinier globe.

Whether the motive is aggression alone or merely the neutralizing of a threat, the process is the same: the adjustment or redistribution of proportions to a ratio that can be dealt with. Perhaps the sight of our bear pedalling his velocipede is not enough to make us forget he was once a fierce brute; if we think that reducing him to an infant will protect us, we can dress him, as the circuses do, in plaid overalls and give him an ice cream cone to lick.

Caricature need not be employed for hostile or neutraliz-

ing purposes, however. Taming Freud seems to me a case in point. During a recent lecture, Dr. A. T. M. Wilson referred to Freud as "our grandfather Freud." I was surprised to hear that several members of the audience interpreted the remark as disrespectful, presumptuous, and tinged with hostility. True, there might have been an aggressive overtone in a remark of this sort, but it seemed clear that here the image evoked, of Freud as an old "zaida" with a long grey beard and several small Freudians on his lap, could only serve to dispel some of the frosty mist about the great man's head so we might feel a little easier in his presence. Hendrik van Loon, that gallant vulgarizer, utilizes a similar method of caricature in his *Lives*, where he justifies an embarrassing familiarity with great personages on the thesis that you can't identify profitably with myths. The above remark might mean: "See, there's Freud. He has a grandfather beard and can be very strict, but he is a man. Now we can speak of him rationally."

The same principle of juxtaposing dissimilar frames of reference, redistribution of proportions is operant in many of the previous anecdotes. Its noblest purpose, as we see in the devastating cartoonery of Steig, is the taming of the vanities and pomposities within us, the rising above these to proclaim "'I am too big to have these causes affect me painfully'" (8, p. 802), the realization led to us by Cervantes and Thurber (in *The White Deer*) that the dragon at the crossroads is made of boxes and tin cans, and piloted by a very old man.

The highest form of humor works toward this end. It is what Freud called the humor of the gallows, the demonstration of, in the face of real danger to the organism, "the triumph of narcissism, the ego's victorious assertion of its invulnerability" (9, p. 217) and the "denial of the claim of reality." As he is being led to the scaffold on a Monday morning, the condemned man wryly observes "'Well, this is a good beginning to the week.'" How much this act proceeds from invulnerability and to what extent reality is actually denied will be discussed at length shortly. But what

is there to be narcissistic about? Perhaps in the mastery evidenced by the criminal through his ability to introduce, at this grim moment, another association from a radically different world. If there were not an apparent clash between the two frames of reference, he might be philosophizing rather than joking.

A nobler example, one which will be examined below, is found among the last letters of Bela Bartok. He was dying of leukemia.

"At present I feel in the best of health, no fever, my strength has returned, I take fine walks in the woods and mountains (of course only with due caution). In March my weight was 87 pounds; now it is 105. I grow fat. I bulge. I explode. You will not recognize me." (3)

QUALIFICATION OF THE FIVE PRINCIPLES OF TAMING

I have presented these examples because of the conceptual distinctions they necessitate if we are to understand the operation of humor as a defense mechanism. I would now like to examine the above material in relation to the previously isolated five principles of taming.

NATURE OF DISPLACED AFFECT

The affects tamed by humor may be specifically directed toward an object (hatred of Hitler), or they might be general and objectless (fear of the unknown in a cemetery, anxiety before battle); specific with non-specific objects (sexual lust) or non-specific with specific objects (feeling uncomfortable around a certain person and taming this by joking with him). They might be ego-oriented (as in pure buffoonery and other forms of exhibitionism), or other-oriented (as with the motives of any parent who jokes away the Bogey Man for his child). In the "loftiest" form of humor, the affect

3. From Halsey Stevens, *The Life and Music of Bela Bartok*, p. 100, Oxford University Press, New York, 1953.

to be dealt with may be a realistically based fear, diffuse anxiety, a grievous sense of loss (21, case of Eugene), naive hedonism, cynical disparagement.

What is the ultimate status of the displaced affect? Freud states that the "humoristic pleasure results from a prevention of emotional feelings" (8, p. 800). The statement will be discussed here in terms of the relation between the original affect and the resultant affect, and later under "repression" in terms of awareness of original affect. Since humor does not prevent humoristic pleasure, which is as much an "emotional feeling" as the original affect, we must understand "prevention of emotional feeling" to mean "prevention of a certain intensity of a certain unpleasant or unacceptable affect."

How much the resultant affect resembles the original affect, rather than is translated into a state resembling euphoria (Freud), seems to depend on both the nature of the affect tamed and the method of taming. If other factors could be kept constant I would hazard that:

i. The original affect is expressed most completely, i.e., is represented more strongly in the resultant affect, in the case of oral, anal, and phallic-sadistic wit, and in pre-genital exhibitionism. The sarcastic quip and the exposing behavior of the buffoon seem less displacements of the desired act than expressions. The quality of the original affect does not need to be altered much; the only real distortion comes through the measures taken to secure invulnerability of the agent.

ii. There is most discrepancy between originally experienced affect and resultant when the affects involved are diffuse anxiety, fear of non-specific objects, feelings of loss of control or self-esteem. The arbitrary quality of the humoristic formalization of expectations has been indicated previously and will be discussed in the next section. The fact that humor "can smile under its tears" does not necessarily connote that the emotion felt is a composite. Rather, this seems to indicate, on the affective level (the cognitive aspect may be quite different) a real change in the quality

of the affect. I confess my thinking is not clear on this subject, and I am not sure how to conceptualize the distinction that seems evident. In the other cases, anxiety arose because the individual wanted to express certain affects, but super-ego taboos prevented direct expression. It is more the social or the "moral-masochistic" consequences that are being warded off defensively by the humoristic displacement. The anxiety tamed in gallows-humor or "world-taming" humor is affect which the ego does *not* wish to express in its original intensity. It is a basic threat to the ego, to the self-esteem system, and might be considered independently of super-ego functions. Though the anxiety is often so intense that it must be expressed, the object of the humoristic displacement is not its covert expression, but a qualitative change in that emotion, so that the resultant affect can be understood to represent neither a denial nor an evocation of the original affect. The very objectlessness of the affect makes its extinction difficult. There is apparently an equipotentiality of responses and the humorist at times seems almost arbitrary in choosing among them. Perhaps this is exactly what we mean by "pointless," bad tasting humor. It may also be the gensis of the "silliness" that is associated with tension and fatigue.

iii. In speaking of the nature of the resultant affect we must consider the extent to which the joker views his act as magically equivalent to the expression of the original affect. This variable probably operates most strongly in the case of caricature, certain forms of aggressive buffoonery, and some aspects of sexual wit (anal expulsive wit, for example). We would expect the equivalence of *word* (drawing, or dance) to *act* to be most prevalent in prelogical states.

EXPECTATION

According to many classical theories of humor, expectation functions in only one role, namely, in the "surprise element" which acts as a catalyst in the release of tension. Tension exists beforehand in the form of anxious anticipation of the emergence of the original affect and the conse-

quences of its expression, but is released when a way is found to express the affect without punishment. Our study shows, however, that expectations function in other ways. In peek-a-boo, tension is intentionally built up, rather than existing previously as is the case with anxiety over affect striving for expression. The participants create (or "tap") the tension; it is not released in one discharge, but "played out" gradually. No real surprise occurs in the play. In dealing with sexual affect the tamer must feign surprise, or somehow seduce or distract his super-ego in order for the thinly-veiled content to be expressed. In peek-a-boo there is more at stake; the infant does not want to be completely surprised, for that might signify loss of the loved one or, if the object is less important than the process, that his predictive capacity had failed, and the difficult attempt to postpone gratification had been unjustified.

The necessity to have predictions confirmed can be more graphically shown in an example of adult peek-a-boo, the teasing humor of Jack Benny. His jokes are few, regular, comfortable, predictable. There is his perennially immutable age, miserliness, the old Maxwell, the Polar Bear Carmichael (the most noted of our stable of trained bears), and the Gas Man in the Basement. No one would be convinced for a moment if you told him that Benny's humor involved surprise, for anyone can anticipate the lines after a few hearings. The delight engendered by this sort of teasing is akin to the child's delight in peek-a-boo. Just as he delights in the success of predicting correctly just where his mother (or less highly cathected objects) will appear, our inveterate Benny listener delights, similarly, in guessing just where the age joke will appear. True, there is satisfaction in mastering the fear of loss of the familiar, relief in its appearance, but he is most concerned in figuring out the manner of appearance. He would be totally unprepared if it never came up again.

The role of humor in formalizing expectations has been indicated above. We see that it arises when one feels threatened but doesn't know quite what to expect. Any action

that might diminish tension is perceived as better than waiting. Obviously, this type of humor goes most often "bad" because the desperate situation engendering it provides neither cues nor a framework which could facilitate its humoristic solution. Something like this may be operating in the case of psychotics where the humor seems particularly inappropriate or the source of laughter particularly obscure even after diligent research into the patient's symbolism. There may be a direct translation of one form of affect for another as some instances of hysterical laughter. Perhaps there is also a tie-up between his function of humor and the "bad tasting" jokes, for example, of the neurotic who provokes rejection, or the familiar person whose intense need for acceptance results in an onslaught of buffoonery in the hopes that one or another of his japes will strike home and the rest be mercifully forgotten.

VULNERABILITY AND MASTERY

If one is to have commerce with foxes and bears, or with the world which gradually alienates itself from us as our powers of discrimination grow sharper, one must be to some degree invulnerable to the hurts and disappointments these objects inevitably inflict.

The humorist's invulnerability can be achieved in a variety of ways, prime among which are: the displacement of agent, action, and object; contrived exposure; self-degradation; reversal of roles or proportions; comparison of dissimilar frames of reference; and the seeking of protection through socially defined roles. The agent is least responsible when people are set to laugh at and enjoy humor. Limits, which could be experimentally studied, are set regarding the type of content joked about and the minimum degree of concealment of original affect tolerable. Within these limits "anything goes," and an audience may respond with an enthusiasm that hardly seems justified by the material. But, if the limits are violated and the humorist goes too far, makes an unlawful thrust, drops the last veil, he is in trouble and the only way out of it is the sarcastic jibe, the masochistic-

exhibitionistic pratfall, or withdrawal.

The crucial question raised by the consideration of vulnerability concerns the degree of invulnerability necessary for the humorist to go about his business. Hobbes, in 1651, speculated on the origins of laughter with an acute insight not equalled until the writings of Freud three hundred years later.

"Sudden glory, is the passion which maketh those Grimaces called LAUGHTER; and is caused by some sudden act of their own that pleaseth them; or by the apprehension of some deformed thing in another, by comparison whereof they suddenly applaud themselves. And it is incident most to them, that are conscious of the fewest abilities in themselves; who are forced to keep themselves in their own favour by observing the imperfections of other men. And therefore much laughter at the defects of others is a sign of Pusillanimity." (4)

Kris (12) cites another passage in Hobbes which elaborates the above: that laughter can also arise from sudden perception of our own eminence compared with our own inferiority. The two most important factors in this formulation are that the comic effect is derived from a process of comparison and that the comparison made is of an experienced ego, an ego perceived as superior with an ego or referent perceived as inferior.

According to Kris, pleasure in the comic effect is pleasure in "a past achievement of the ego which has required long practice to bring it about. We experience not only the success of the achievement itself, but the whole process by which we gradually attained this mastery" (12, p. 85). "Enjoyment of the comic entails a feeling of complete security from danger" (12, p. 83).

What is meant by "complete security from danger"? A

4. Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, pp. 45-46, E. P. Dutton, New York, 1950.

young boy in our neighborhood has been learning to ride a bicycle. He has fallen down several times in the early stages of his efforts, has cried some of these times, has pouted and kicked at rocks at other times. Now, just when he thought he was doing especially well, he rounds a turn, runs up on the curb, and falls down onto the lawn. But instead of crying, this time he laughs. He seems to be experiencing comic pleasure, yet we cannot say the child was in fact free from danger, or that he felt completely secure. Nor can we say, if we grant that the pleasure expressed by his laughter was pleasure in past mastery, that it was related to mastery of the specific skill of bicycle riding. For the child, "past achievement of the ego" may be mastery of a similar skill such as walking, or, more broadly, mastery of situations which were formerly anxious.

Anxiety here is conceptualized as the shadow of vulnerability obscuring confidence in mastery. In discussing the overcoming of anxiety, Kris incisively translates the cognitive correlate of the humoristic reaction, the "I can do it better" of Hobbes' insecure humorist, into simply "I can do it," endowing the paraphrase with a twofold implication: "I can overcome the present threat," and "I have access to a mechanism of defense which has succeeded in overcoming past anxieties." The first is associated with functional pleasure and is independent of the comic effect. The second is the peculiar referent of comic pleasure. When the child laughed in the grass, when the juggler recovered his orange, their pleasure derived from the recognition and reassertion of mastery in the face of fallibility.

For most of us there will be always bears around which must be tamed. Humor, then, is bound up with insecurity if we think of it as a response to our being continually confronted with situations in which unpleasant or prohibited affects threaten us. The only kind of complete invulnerability we can speak of is what Kris finally points out as the rare invulnerability gained by having utilized the process of taming in such a way and to such an extent that a transformation of the ego has been effected.

REGRESSION

Some writers have maintained that the pleasure of humor comes about because the individual regresses into and snuggles up in a state of infantile omnipotence. Freud himself was ambivalent about the nature of regression in humor.

"I am unable to decide whether the lowering to the level of the child is only a special case of comic degradation, or whether everything depends on the degradation to the level of a child." (8, p. 796)

"That comic pleasure has its source in the 'Quantitative contrast,' in the comparison of big and small, which ultimately expresses the essential relation of the child to the grown-up, would indeed be a peculiar coincidence if the comic had nothing else to do with the infantile." (*ibid.*, footnote, p. 796)

The comparison is being made between the infantile and adult ego. Later (9, pp. 218-219), he speaks of similar process of comparison, except now the objects of comparison are not two aspects of the ego, but the super-ego and the ego, which removes

"the accent, . . . transferring it to the super-ego. To the super-ego, thus inflated, the ego can appear tiny and all its interests trivial, and with this fresh distribution of energy it may be an easy matter for it to suppress the potential reactions of the ego."

Regardless of the members of the comparison, "infantile" is used here in its most primitive connotation, to suggest an unqualifiedly blissful state, in which one is unresponsive to external stimulation.

Another sense of "regression" in reference to humor arises on more cognitively-oriented grounds: the process of the humor of shifting sets or frames of reference, which functions to tame present anxiety by including it in a larger or less threatening framework, is analogous to the way in which a child may be easily distracted and shift easily be-

tween various aspects of reality, or between reality and fantasy.

One can also call humor regressive (as suggested in our discussion of adolescent peek-a-boo) when the specific pleasurable reaction obtained is markedly similar to the delight obtained in infancy from the fulfillment of expectations and the confirming of predictions.

The most common usage of the term applies to instances when, due to an inability to cope with reality, the individual returns to previously successful patterns of behavior. The regression may be in the form of an actual replication of earlier behavior, it might be a more mature way of expressing an early trait (such as sarcasm expressing oral-sadism), or it may be considered formally—as the employment of a trustworthy set of skills when other, more genital skills have proven inadequate or poorly mastered. We see the latter phenomenon with speech-makers who are terrified of their audiences, unsure of their material, and so, who pepper the speeches with attempts at wit, an art in which they are more secure and less responsible.

Though, in humor, regression may occur in any or all of these ways, I do not think it necessary that it should. The notion of regression suggests another, related, process which is perhaps more vital to the production of humor, but I would like to defer exposition of it until later.

REPRESSION

In what sense can we understand the proposition that humor achieves a rejection of the reality of the unpleasant situation, regardless of the source of the unpleasantness? Compare it with another proposition: that there is no "withdraw(al) from conscious attention (of) the ideas connected with the painful affect." How can there be a rejection of reality at the same time as there is no repression of reality? Since it is difficult to conceive of this as being simultaneous, perhaps we can resolve the opposition by treating the awareness of painful affect as temporally prior to the retreat into

childlike security. But if we utilize this notion, besides abusing the delicate dynamism of our thought, we will be making the humorist more distractible than he is, and granting him an escape-visa, which he might desire at times, but which his ego may be too proud to accept. In the fragment from Bartok's letter we see no such retreat; Bartok has gotten away with nothing by mocking his emaciatedness. Not even when he says "I bulge! I explode!" is he experiencing a release from awareness of imminent death. What has happened is that he now has made a comparison which permits him to say he is, yes, fatter than a toothpick, fatter than a drumstick, fatter than a violin, but at the same time desperately thinner than he ought to be. Likewise, the classical gallows-bird doesn't for a moment forget that he's going to be hung; he is amused by the *difference*, not the escape. The security is gained by being able to make the comparison: for the rest of the world this day will be sunny, but the world includes this courtyard where I am to be hung. Of course, the paraphrase changes the comparison into a philosophic one, and thus a different sort of taming, but it is the inadequacy and deceptiveness of paraphrase that drives us to look for something besides the objects of comparison in our search for the basis of humor.

If we concern ourselves with repression as regards attention, we may come closer. Given that an individual may be aware of the painful affect he is defending against, and that he may be able to specify the "big" and "small" members of the humoristic comparison, his attention is not directed towards the process of comparison. His introspections only specify the objects of comparison, they do not tell us what *about* big-and-small makes it funny. In this respect we are in the dilemma of the critic who, realizing he can only state signifieates by paraphrase, writes a bad poem, somehow related to the work under study, but as far from it as a list of synonyms.

CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY: TAMING AS UNATTENDED COMPARISON

Let us consider together attention and a special kind of regression, in the hopes of minimizing the bad side of paraphrase.

Remember the fox's description of how the wheat field would, through taming, gradually come to remind him of the little prince's golden hair? This association and similar ones, like the odd linkages of dream-work, and the perplexing pronouncement of mystics and people in love, are in a structural sense infantile since they resemble products of the primary thought process of the child. In the easy skittering from object to object, they suggest the child's distractibility and his freedom from categories. Humorous associations occur, which might ordinarily be limited by the ego's secondary process in its literal reliance on "geometrical-technical" descriptions; conventional separation of objects yields to a perception of both physiognomic unities and distinctions which are historically prior and more closely fused with needs. (That these unities and distinctions may often persist even in the "secondary process" is shown by, for example, the presence of words referring to intermodal stimulus qualities in our language.) It is this structural concept of regression that is fundamental to any analysis of the humoristic process.

Attention figures in the analysis in two ways: first, attention is withdrawn from categories predominant in the secondary process; secondly, the ego gives up an idea to the unconscious for elaboration, (5) thus rendering attention impossible and discursive language inaccurate for analysis of the process, due to its misleading implication of temporal sequence. We can see more clearly now what Freud means by the withdrawal of psychical energy (what he called "mo-

5. See Kris, "On Preconscious Mental Processes," in *Psychoanalytic Explorations in Art*, Int. Univ. Press, New York, 1952, especially pp. 312-314.

bile attention") in the verbal retelling of a dream. In this sense—of the suspension of attention—"repression" is a necessary feature of the process of producing humor. There occurs not a regression to infantile modes of perception, but what Kris (*ibid.*) calls a controlled regression, an ego-regulated regression involving the unattended redistribution of cathexes.

Only through a concept like controlled regression can we see the interrelation of the various defenses which together account for the defense function of humor. The problem arises from the necessity to deal with anxiety-producing affect without denying the reality or immediacy of that effect. The individual may wish to express the affect but super-ego or social pressures forbid him. Or, he may wish to escape the affect lest it overwhelm him. Vulnerability may come about through exposure on any of these three fronts—id, super-ego, or reality: He may secure invulnerability by changing the quality of affect, by displacing act, agent, or object. Whatever means he chooses, a comparison is always involved whether it be comparison of two aspects of himself, comparison of one meaning of a word with another, comparison of one frame of reference with another, etc. The comparison may be quantitative, the adjustment of physical proportions by inflating or deflating the threatening object or the object of identification, or it may be qualitative. But over and above the objects of comparison and the redistribution or covert expression of affects is the *process* of unattended comparison and elaboration in the unconscious. The solution, then, is in the ability of the ego to utilize "the primary process and not be only overwhelmed by it." (Kris, *op. cit.*, p. 312). Pleasure resulting from such mastery, like pleasure in tamed foxes and bears, lies in the ability to "be familiar" with the unconscious at no expense to reality.

The larger function of humor is to gain not only increased mobility of cathexis through the maintenance of a liberal but controlled relationship with the unconscious, but to regain accessibility to fundamental, learned relationships which have been obscured in the process and precariousness

of growing up. Or, as the fox has said so long ago—"because of the color of the wheat fields."

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Van Gogh's Chairs

by

Harold P. Blum M. D.

Vincent Van Gogh was highly ambivalent toward Paul Gauguin. Gauguin, five years older, and a more experienced artist, aggravated this ambivalence with a supercilious and condescending manner. Van Gogh called him "Master" and considered him the greater artist and intellect. However, Van Gogh argued with him intensely and would not accept Gauguin's art criticism; when they exchanged self-portraits, Van Gogh claimed his own as artistically equal. (1, 2) He was keenly aware that Gauguin was more successful at the local brothel (3, 4) and felt that his own impassioned painting drained his sex desire. (5) He had been twice rejected as a serious suitor and though he had lived with a fertile mistress, he had never sired any children. He knew that Gauguin had attained marriage and paternity. (6, 7) He was admiring, yet envious of Gauguin's superior virility and sexual success.

Psychoanalytic considerations of their relationship also indicate that Van Gogh was homoerotically attracted to Gauguin and transferred to him the desire to be reunited with the powerful father. (8, 9, 10) Having first met Gauquin in Paris, he had insistently urged Gauquin to join him in Arles, France, and invited him to live in his house. (11) He prepared the guest room like a boudoir for Gauquin's arrival in October, 1888. (12)

Two days before Christmas, 1888, Van Gogh spontaneously flung a glass in Gauquin's face in a cafe. The next evening, Christmas Eve, Van Gogh threatened Gauquin with a razor but then turned from physical combat. Instead, he

cut off his own ear and gave it wrapped as a gift to a prostitute at the local brothel. (13, 14) This has been interpreted as a substitute castration following assault on the father-figure. The symbolic penis was then presented to the mother figure. (15, 16) It is noteworthy that Van Gogh occasionally painted his own ear injected, and in a self-portrait (1886-1887) one ear is seen flushed and engorged.

The time as well as the circumstances of the assault was related to a father conflict. Van Gogh was depressed and often quarreled with his cleric father on Christmas. He had tried to emulate his father in studying for the ministry, and failing in that, went to work as an impoverished Christ-like evangelist in Christmas 1879. On Christmas Eve, 1881, his father asked him to leave home following a violent altercation. (17) Strife tended to occur at Christmas because Van Gogh, who identified with Christ, then demanded equality with the Divine Father, the omnipotent father of his infancy.

The emotions involved in Van Gogh's Christmas assault on Gauguin have been reconstructed psychoanalytically primarily from Van Gogh's letters, but not from his painting of that period. Should not Van Gogh have manifestly expressed such agitated emotions in his art at that time? The striking symbolism of that period's paintings stimulated this investigation.

In two extraordinary paintings on his easel (December 1888-January 1889) during his acute conflict with Gauguin, Van Gogh depicted his feelings about their relationship. These are the famed chairs, "Van Gogh's Chair", also called "The Chair and The Pipe" (Figure 1) and "Gauguin's Armchair" (Figure 2).

He began the chairs at a time of overt contention with Gauguin shortly before the catastrophic climax of their relationship. Actually, he first painted his own chair the very day he ran out on the fields for six hours after pleading with Gauguin to "be a good chap". (18)

Art critics have exclaimed how these chairs portray and compare the two personalities. (19) One critic found in the chairs a fundamental contrast "as between male and



Figure I

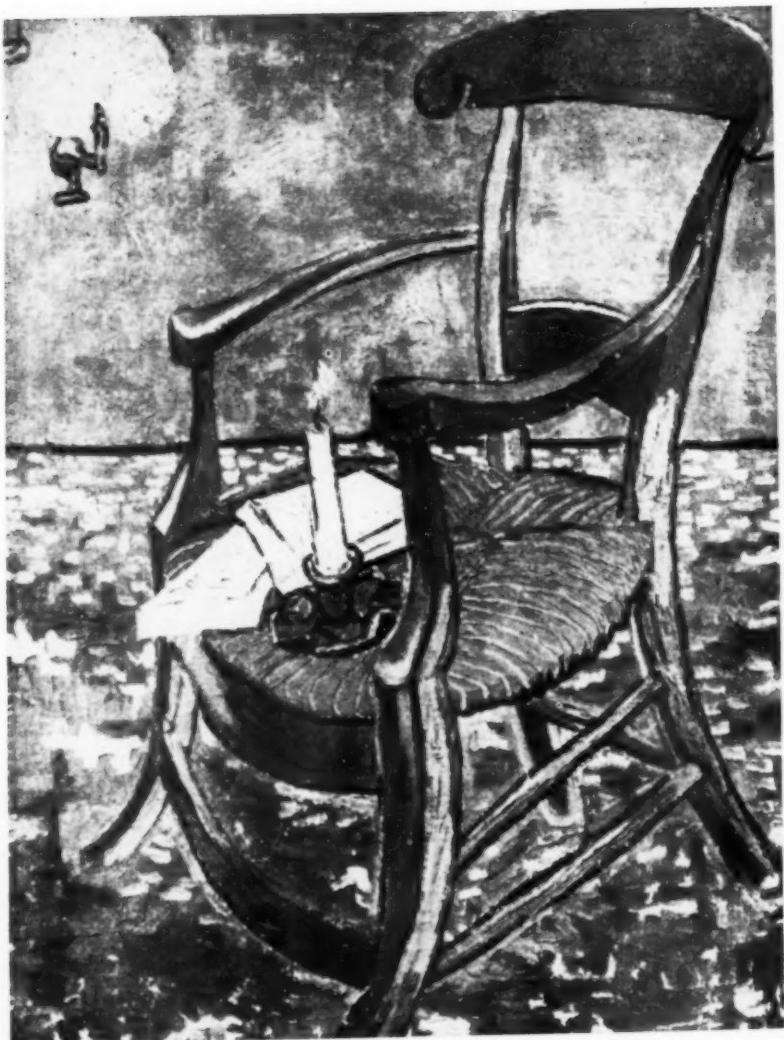


Figure 11



Figure III



female", (20) and another thought there was a symbolic connection between Van Gogh's chair and his pipe. (21) The chair paintings are indeed a pair of still lifes alive with the symbolic essence of their creator's turmoil. Van Gogh's chair is crude and simple; it supports his pipe and tobacco pouch. This same chair is also seen in the background of his painting of his bedroom at Arles. Gauguin's armchair is more elaborate, dignified, and graceful as would befit the "Master". Van Gogh had procured the furniture and undoubtedly bestowed this chair on Gauguin.

The pipe and tobacco pouch on Van Gogh's chair and the lighted candle with two books on Gauguin's chair, are genital symbols. They are located in the positions of the genitals of their two invisible sitters. Van Gogh has depicted his feelings of impotence, sterility, and inferiority with his small downcast phallus and old worn scrotum. Contrast Gauguin's candle, a larger, erect, responsive (glowing) penis. Van Gogh's pipe is not lit, and there is no residual smoking. There is no glow of active life nor suggestion of recent activity. Gauguin's phallus stands next to the two large testicular symbols, books—artistic creations, though the phallic candle is the cynosure. Van Gogh was envious of Gauguin's phallus and admired it immensely. In this connection, an armchair alone is patently more phallic than a simple chair, the very word emphasizing an appendage. (The father in our society often uses the only armchair at the table.)

Significantly, the pipe and tobacco pouch symbolism first appears in a still life done just after the death of the artist's father in 1885. Van Gogh portrayed his father's pipe and pouch on a table with a vase of flowers. (22) The flowers mourn the father's castration and death, but also implicit is the resurrection of the adored genitals through art with the associated idea of the immortality of seed and flower of genitalia and offspring, male and female. Here, inchoate, is the artist's later theme of the sower fertilizing the earth (father making mother earth flower).

The chairs had a long latent history in Van Gogh's un-

conscious. At twenty-four, after a visit from his father, he wrote: "And when . . . I saw father's chair . . . and though I knew we should see each other again pretty soon, I cried like a child". (23) In 1882, at twenty-nine, he expressed great interest in a reproduction of Filde's woodcut of Charles Dickens' empty chair, done just after Dickens' demise. (24, 25, 26) Van Gogh eulogized Dickens with superlatives analogous to those he then applied to his idol, father. "Dickens paints with words", "There is no writer comparable". (27) Dickens was a symbol of the creative father.

Many a son is intrigued by his father's chair, and may overtly demand to sit in it. Van Gogh yearned for his father's seat, and saw an invitation in the chair's emptiness. The artist was morbidly fascinated by the empty chair which reminded him of the lost or dead father, and unconsciously symbolically retained the father's presence at the same time. The empty chair signified the fulfillment of the death wish toward the father-figure, but also served as a monument for his preservation. Van Gogh's execution of his own empty chair was symbolic of his hostile identification with father and his acceptance of the supreme penalty for this hostility. His chair alone was a comparison between himself and his unconscious image of his seated father. Undoubtedly, he had been very impressed as he stared at father's genitals or their bulging outlines. The comparison becomes manifest when he simultaneously paints father Gauguin's chair with his own.

In December, 1888, at thirty-five, Van Gogh combined the chair and pipe theme into one painting. He had been deeply concerned with the empty chair of the father-figure Dickens and the pipe and pouch of his real father after their respective demises. They were memorials unconsciously linked together in homoerotic attraction and in denial of castrating death wishes. It is no accident that these symbols are united in the artist's painting years later when the same murderously ambivalent feelings transferred to father Gauguin burst to the surface. Significantly, in Van Gogh's

first comment after the coma following his self-mutilation, was a request for his pipe and pouch. (28) Possessing his pipe and pouch, he pacified himself and recovered stability through denial of his own castration and the simultaneous oral satisfaction of smoking. After he had fatally shot himself, he also asked for his pipe and smoked while awaiting death. (29)

Van Gogh's chair paintings, reminiscent of father and his paternal sexuality, are painted with an ardor appropriate to the awesome feelings invested in them. The chair reflect the same scopophilic intensity with which Van Gogh must have studied his seated father. The figures in the chairs are blocked out except for the genitals which become most prominent, though symbolically disguised. In painting the chairs, Van Gogh compared his weak sexuality with his virile omnipotent father-substitute, murdered and mourned the castrating father, revered the paternal penis, and sublimated his longed-for union with father and father's phallus. Although Van Gogh paints books elsewhere, the chair-Dickens association may further explanation of the choice of book symbols in the armchair.

Van Gogh wrote that his chair was of white wood. (30) That he painted it pale yellow in daylight (sunlight) indicates his attempted identification with father and paternal energy, since several analysts have deduced that yellow and sunlight symbolized both father and libido. (31, 32)

However, there are indications that pale yellow has another meaning, even if derived from yellow. Though the unconscious is not rational, it appears that to Van Gogh, pale yellow really represents an anemia of yellow, and logically suggests inadequate father identification, impotence, and castration. Concerning his painting, "Night Cafe", September 1888, he wrote that he "tried to express the terrible passions of humanity by means of red and green . . . in an atmosphere like the devil's furnace, of *pale sulphur*". In this setting, he asserted that "one could run mad or commit a crime". (33, 34) The devil's furnace of pale sulphur is Van Gogh's inner world of guilt, rage, and

depression centered about castration conflict. He wrote of his painting "The Reaper" that it was "a fair pale yellow" and that he had tried for an overall effect of "sulphur". (35) "The Reaper", pale yellow like his chair, has been interpreted as symbolic of castration and death in punishment for arrogating paternal power in "The Sower". (35)

Van Gogh also wrote that Gauguin's armchair had a "red and green night effect", (37) a menacing association to dark forbidden impulses, and corresponding to his later description of a pictorial image of anxiety. In analyzing his anxiety and tranquility states in the Insane Asylum, 1889, he wrote of a representative anxious painting: "This combination of oehre red, of green with a grey shadow over it and black contours, produces the feeling of anguish. . . . Moreover, this idea is confirmed by the motif of the huge tree struck by lightning." The struck tree was "sawn off". (38) Evidently, "red and green night effect" (grey shadows and black contour—night) refers in particular to castration anxiety.

Actually, aside from Van Gogh's chair, the predominant colors of both paintings are red and green, emblazoning "the terrible passions of humanity" which the artist sensed in himself and Gauguin. The overall color scheme together with the rival chairs expresses the tortured artist's feelings of oedipal jealousy, castration fear and impotence, homo-erotic attraction and denial, narcissistic insult, depression and rage. The patterned tile and repetitive ornamentation in Van Gogh's chair and Gauguin's armchair, respectively, are schizoid compulsive defenses against the dangerous, frightening conflicts. The defenses fail and Van Gogh "runs mad" and threatens criminal assault on Gauguin while painting the chairs. Shortly after the assault, in January, 1888, he mentioned working on the chairs in the same letter in which he wrote, "Fortunately, Gauguin and I . . . are not yet armed with machine guns and other destructive weapons". (39)

A fantasy relating to Gauguin's loss is expressed in the painting "Still Life with Onions", January 1889 (Fig-

ure 3). This was one of the first paintings done after Gauguin's immediate departure following the ear episode. Gauguin's presence at the table is inferred from the kettle and contiguous candle; the presence of Van Gogh, seated opposite, is inferred from his representative bottle, pipe, and pouch. The homoerotic symbolic display in an oral milieu is perhaps suggestive of latent fellatio wishes (as is his pipe-smoking, not pertinent for discussion here). The letter-opener lies adjacent to the candle, suggesting again the knife against the penis, the desire to castrate Gauguin. But the knife-point is blunted, for here the "hatchet is buried". In fantasy, Gauguin has returned, and the tears and bitterness in the onions between them are to be devoured. (The sprouting onions are also genital symbols on a deeper level). It is known that Van Gogh very much hoped Gauguin would return and disclaimed any rancor toward him. (40)

These paintings, especially the chairs, present Van Gogh's terrible and passionate conflicts. He has expressed his most powerful emotions in his painting, as we would expect. Through psychoanalytic insight, we penetrate his particular choice of content, color, and composition, though not his genius at transforming these elements into great Art.

92 Cherry Hill Circle
Branford, Conn.

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Freud, Logos and Eros

by

S. H. Posinsky, Ph.D.

It is not necessary, so shortly after the centenary of Freud's birth, to re-examine his *impact* on contemporary thought. For better or worse, certain Freudian terms and concepts are a part of daily conversation. Although these terms are not always used with knowledge or precision, it is significant that they are current even among people who are personally or professionally indifferent (sometimes, hostile) to psychoanalysis.

It is also noteworthy, if not without its parallels in the history of psychology, that the centenary of Freud's birth was ushered in by a renewed emphasis on the hereditary or somatic "causes" (if such there are) and aspects of mental illness—e.g., schizophrenia (1, 2). There is a special irony here in that the culturalists and "environmentalists," whether oriented in psychiatry or the social sciences, tend to criticize Freud for his biological reductionism.

It is perhaps even more ironic that we should be witnessing a flight into medievalism and religiosity at a time when the physical and social sciences are making such significant advances. The rationale for certain phases of this regression may be ascribed to the work of Jung, Jaspers, Toynbee, *et al.* Jung, in fact, by turning several scientists into shamans, has reversed the thesis of Sir James Frazer that shamanism was the prototype of science.

If Jung's mysticism were unique, it could be written off as a harmless aberration—a by-product of his differences with Freud and/or the twentieth century. Yet it is an essential part of the contemporary medievalism that some psychiatrists "endorse" the therapeutic benefits of religion

(3); while others, like Jung, presume to justify (on psychological grounds) the recent Catholic dogmas about the Virgin Mary. Unfortunately, such matters are simply beyond their professional competence.

Similarly, the philosopher-psychiatrist Jaspers, though independent of Jung, has long espoused a mystique which, for all its philosophical subtlety, reiterates that "Marxism, psychoanalysis, and ethnological theory (eugenics)," an unholy trinity, are marked by "peculiarly destructive qualities" (4). Jaspers repeats the cliché that the Freudian psychology results in ethical nihilism ("faith in the null"), fatalism, license, and so on.* As if these charges were not serious enough, Jaspers has also described Freud as a source of "anti-reason" (or "unreason") and has chided him for a "lack of spirituality" (5).

Some of this is reminiscent of the Jungian critique, which Edward Glover has so masterfully dissected in his book, *Freud or Jung*—except that the avowedly "spiritual" Jungians sometimes deplore Freud for his dysphoric "pessimism," for his "narrow rationalism" and materialism.

Charges of "anti-rationality" and "unspirituality" are seemingly in contradiction; and they have a spurious ring in the middle of the twentieth century, especially when used by one psychiatrist to describe the work of another. Yet the voice of the "faith healer" is heard in the land, and Jaspers is really the philosopher's philosopher. Nevertheless, his eminence as a philosopher and his refusal to condone Hitlerism should not obscure the limitations of his psychiatric theory (7, 8) and his vehemence toward Freud.

Quite apart from the religiosity espoused by Jung, Jaspers, and Toynbee, there are certain anti-supernatural

* Compare the remarks of Dr. John Friedman, a recent South African convert from Judaism to Catholicism: "Freudian naturalism has undoubtedly corrupted many souls and been a power behind the anti-religion of modernism. It is a power which has combined with other powers, conspired, if you will, to obstruct and oppose the Kingdom of God . . ." (6). The other powers include Marxism, Judaism, Protestantism, etc.

trends within modern Protestant theology; and these are also responsible for the deceptive rapport between psychiatry and religion. Thus, religion is seen merely as a system of ethics, wise teachings, humanism, or mental hygiene; and there is a minimal emphasis on the supernatural, apologetics, or ecclesiasticism. Similarly, a professional philosopher, Williams, criticizes the "mythical" (supernatural) aspects of religion and writes: "Ministers should be trained more in psychiatry and less in Greek" (9). There are dangers in such a position, both for psychiatry and the ministry.**

At any rate, we live in an age of curious "syntheses." The late Rabbi Liebman attempted a sober marriage of Freud and Moses, achieving considerable popular success in his *Peace of Mind*; while the correlation of psychoanalysis and certain political tenets has brought less than international acclaim to Wilhelm Reich. More recently, Coulson (12), an English physicist and mathematician, has discovered that science is essentially a *religious activity*, though not the whole of religion, and that many scientists are not aware of the religious nature of their work. Nor, finally, is it a secret that Toynbee (who insists repeatedly that his work is "empirical") has blandly introduced theology and revelation into the realms of philosophy, history, and social science—in apparent disregard of the past four centuries of western thought. Since Toynbee has chosen to describe the Renaissance and after as "the paroxysms of a deadly seizure," punctuated only by the weariness of "disillusionment," no objective discussion is possible; and it would be futile to inquire if the work of Newton, Bach, Freud, and

** This is not to deny that some psychiatric insight is of value to ministers, teachers, and so on. But psychiatry, like surgery, should be practised by professionals. Conversely, the psychiatrist or the physician is in a *partly ritual* relation to the patient and is perhaps in danger of identifying himself with the *professional ritualist*, or of considering the clergyman an undifferentiated member of the therapeutic "team." These dangers are inherent, to varying degrees, in several recent publications (10, 11).

Einstein, to mention only the barest minimum, deserves such a description.

The catalog of octopoid eclectics and glib "syntheses" could be extended, but without profit. It is perhaps more significant to point out that Max Weber (a synthesist of some calibre, but certainly no friend of atheism, Marxism, psychoanalysis, or "eugenics") addressed himself to these problems a long time ago. Thus, Weber denied that science can answer Kant's three basic questions, "What do I know? What should I do? What can I hope for?" Weber shared Tolstoy's complaint that science is an endless technique, never completed, always provisional, with the result that the meaning of life gets lost in the process, as does death, which is no longer a completion. Challenging the validity of any but empirical data, Weber was aware of the nature and limitations of the scientific method; and he knew that science can never deal with essence, genesis, purpose, totality, or "fundamental reality." Weber did not deny, however, the special clarity which science can make possible, the awareness of alternatives, if any, and the means toward limited ends. A rigorous empiricist and self-conscious methodologist in the social sciences, rejecting Hegelian inexorability, Weber was nevertheless able to maintain that man is more than (or not merely) a technician and scientist, that there are possibilities of reason and will, and that man's moral nature and existential behavior can provide a *subjective answer* which is not available from empirical science (13).

It is in this inevitably dichotomous (but not schizoid) spirit that Schweitzer has written: "Only at quite rare moments have I felt really glad to be alive . . . To the question whether I am an optimist or a pessimist, I answer that my knowledge is pessimistic, but my willing and hoping are optimistic" (14).

Freud, indifferent to philosophy and critical of religion,*** dismissed Kant's categorical imperative as the

*** Primarily because the data of religion cannot be validated em-

super-ego in disguise. But, mechanist and determinist though he was, Freud found room in his theoretical system for reason and will, even if this is superficially paradoxical. Despite (perhaps, *because of*) his basic devotion to materialism, Freud re-discovered the first and most difficult principle of classical idealism: "Know thyself." If this state of grace is more easily defined than attained, it is neither nihilistic nor fatalistic.

Agnostic, less than optimistic, bold and sometimes caustic, Freud championed the bitter doctrine of psychic determinism. It is a scientific hypothesis which can make no sense to those who equate psyche with consciousness; and few scientific concepts have so roundly challenged (and been rebuked by) the infantile omnipotence and narcissism which emanate, if variably, from each of us. Worse, Freud asserted that aggression is a psycho-physiological phenomenon, that it is inherent in all men, and that the putative "death instinct" (the ultimate cause of sado-masochism) must be contained by a "reasonable society" and counter-balanced by Logos and Eros. If, as in *Civilization and its Discontents*, he draws several forced parallels, these are the inevitable consequences of the reductionist method. But he does not, for example, accept the dangerous myth that the right kind of war is either "natural" or eugenic.

Instinctual aggression and the death instinct are not accepted by all Freudian analysts, and it would appear that these concepts are not empirically verifiable as yet. In the long run, however, it does not matter if one assumes the identity of Thanatos and aggression, instinctual aggression alone, or the more specific frustration-aggression theory. The problem remains the same, given the recognition of group needs and the importance of society. Man makes society and culture, which in their turn make man. These subtle

pirically, and because religious ideas and convictions are assumed to be antithetical to the intellectual and emotional development of the individual. But there are various methods of studying religion; and religion has other than psychological dimensions (15, 16, 17).

and manifold inter-relations can be examined at specific points, structurally, dynamically, or genetically, and with the various methods of biology, psychology, history, and sociology. Evidence and conclusions will differ, but social man must *recognize* both himself and society. The completely socialized human being (who has internalized the appropriate social values and lives merely for the perpetuation of his family, church, army, or society) is an anthropological fiction which is implicit in cultural relativism. (So, in fact, is the converse but equally fictional psychoanalytic myth of the perfectly analyzed analyst.) Yet, in the words of Haldane: "The challenge, then, amounts to this. It is not enough to behave as morally as our forefathers did. We have got to behave better than they did, because we live in a world where the consequences of collective wrongdoing are much more dangerous" (18).

"Behave better . . ." or more realistically, perhaps with less sado-masochism. But, as with the concept of the "reasonable" or "good" society, we are moving here across thin semantic ice. Oscar Wilde is said to have considered the tag *Homo sapiens* as "rather premature." Man is not, and probably can never be, a completely rational being. But if aggression is an aspect of organic life, so are love and cooperation. Nineteenth century *laissez-faire* capitalism and individualism found justification in Darwin (though other candidates were available) for a ruthless exploitation of man by man, forever and ever, world without end, and according to the sacred laws of "nature, red in tooth and claw." Several generations of Huxleys have not resolved the problem of "evolution and ethics" (19, 20); but, from Kropotkin and Reclus to Reinheimer, Sherrington, Allee, and Ashley-Montagu, there has been a great accumulation of evidence that cooperation is an important factor in evolution.

If aggression is instinctive, then prize fights and other blood sports may have their social value as sublimations—as may occasional street-brawls, a "reasonable" degree of crime, and less dramatic forms of "acting out." "Acting

"out" cannot, of course, be encouraged; it is generally a displacement rather than a sublimation, and it has therapeutic as well as social dangers. But such behavior, when not quantitatively disruptive, may have *social value* to some extent, in that it sets off homeostatic mechanisms within the community. Thus, Homans (21) has clarified the social significance of crime (i.e., of anti-social behavior in general): it challenges, tests, and validates (in fact, accentuates) the various sanctions and institutions which must resist it.

In primitive society, disruptive intra-group hostilities and tensions are channeled into inter-group rivalries (e.g., gambling, athletic or ritual contests, feuds and war). For the large and complex society, however, war may now be suicidal; and, except in war, so few people interact, so moderately and infrequently, between the modern national states that the value of, say, the Olympie Games is rather minimal. Yet aggressive energies also find an outlet (short of crime and war) in socially acceptable intra-national rivalries, in work and other sublimations, in variable degrees of masochism, and to some extent in sexuality.

The answer, however, does not appear to lie merely in emotional safety-valves, which may be inadequate or illusory, but in the positive strengthening of all factors which make for reason, love, and cooperation. Yet it is impossible to love everyone or to make a social revolution every fortnight. Even the "good society" is inevitably repressive; and, to such diverse people as Plato, Hobbes, Rousseau, and Freud, a certain degree of repression, external and internal, is the necessary price of our survival and culture.****

Since, in Freud's view, society must encourage sublimation and suppress "acting out," it is improper for Jas-

**** There are, of course, psychoanalytically oriented students who challenge the thesis that civilization requires the subjugation of instinctual drives (*cf.* Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization*). Homans (22), who is indifferent to psychoanalysis, attempts via interaction theory to reconcile the theory of the "social contract" and the theory of the "social mold." I am not convinced that he is completely successful.

pers and others to equate psychoanalysis with ethical nihilism. Freud saw no contradiction between determinism or materialism, on one hand, and reason and responsibility, on the other; and, even in his therapeutic work, he signed no "blank checks" for anyone.

Yet it is an error to pretend that science is not socially unsettling to some degree. For science must ask questions relentlessly—must, in fact, challenge traditional views and "common sense"—whereas society requires stability and a general acceptance of traditions. This problem is as old as Plato's *Republic* and cannot be resolved by a flight into religion or medievalism. Stable, even theocratic, societies have gone to seed; and contemporary western society, secular and transitional as it is, is not completely lawless and unstable.

It becomes progressively clearer that religion and ritual are not synonymous (23, 24). Every human institution, from the nuclear family to the state, has rituals and sanctions which aim at restoring or maintaining the equilibrium of the people involved. If these rituals and sanctions sometimes employ religious referents, they are not therefore to be taken as religious ceremonies (e.g., birth or naming, marriage, death, school graduations, the playing of the national anthem before a game begins, the installation of a monarch or president, legal holidays, etc.). Rather, they are the ceremonies ("rites of passage" or "rites of intensification") of the institution employing them, and are to be understood as marking changes in the interactions of individuals and groups.

Homologous ceremonies (without religious or supernatural referents) exist even in professedly atheist societies (contemporary Russia and China) and serve identical functions. Thus, a sociological study of the Russian family reports: "To counteract the surviving interest in religious ceremonies Communists introduced the celebration of a marriage by an announcement dinner, the christening ceremony where Lenin's picture took the place of the icon, and the Communist funeral almost identical with the religious

funeral procession except for the substitution of a red coffin for a white. Revolutionary anniversaries were celebrated by parades where huge pictures of Marx and Lenin replaced the holy images borne by priests in the old religious festivals" (25).

Quite apart from the existence of non-religious or only referentially religious rituals within every institution, there is also the fact that every human being interacts in a number of institutions and suspends his statuses when they are not appropriate. Thus, the scientist is also a citizen, husband, father, etc., etc., and must behave differently in these various roles (differently, that is, in terms of "social character" or the "public personality"). Similarly, cultural or ethical relativity, a valuable scientific concept, has helped to clarify the enormous data of anthropology; but even the relativists do not challenge the values and norms of their own culture.

Anthropologists, especially the cultural relativists, tend to deny a cleavage between the individual and his society. It is presently more fashionable to see the individual as a mere coordinate of various statuses and roles—as he is indeed if we examine only the manifestations of his ego (and the conscious parts of his super-ego) and ignore the id. Man is a remarkably adaptable animal, but he is not infinitely plastic. Although precise "needs" or other psycho-cultural constants cannot be easily delineated (and few are completely uniform in all times and places), there are certain rough margins beyond which no individual or group may safely traverse.

The problem of optimal function is not merely one of socialization, of internalizing and thus rendering automatic those group values which make for social survival. Indeed, it is the internalized and unquestioned value, together with its emotional cathexis, which may function as the most insidious and pathological despot. That people adapt to a "neurotic" or "sick" society (26) is a testimonial to human malleability. But anthropological concepts of normality are largely relativistic and statistical (as they must be).

Psychoanalysts, on the other hand, are concerned not only with normative behavior as such; they also measure their therapeutic work against abstract (not necessarily unreal) concepts of potential and optimal function which are derived from the biological nature of the species and not merely from the specific culture of any human group at a given time (27).

No mature science, physical or social, can answer Kant's three questions in terms that are meaningful on the level of the individual. Whether we are determinists or not, and whether the determinism be cultural, economic, psychic, bio-chemical or what, we tend to omit science and determinism from certain non-professional aspects of our daily lives—without becoming irrational or irresponsible. Perhaps we would find each other (and ourselves) intolerable if we did not. Certainly no tribe is more tedious than that made up of *amateur*—generally, adolescent—anthropologists and psychoanalysts. When their forte is anthropology, they confound people with a "cultural relativism" which is not relevant to the needs and details of daily life within a specific culture. When their forte is psychoanalysis, their stock-in-trade is a hymn to "acting out," which they see as a specific against any and all illnesses of the mind and body. Nevertheless, these amateurs (in the worst sense of the word) do focus attention, unknowingly, on certain lacunae of thought or on real or unreal disagreements among the professionals. Thus, much confusion and disagreement arise in the study of personality and culture because the anthropologists are frequently referring solely to "social character" or "public personality," while the psychoanalysts are largely concerned with unconscious processes. These problems may be approached on various levels and by various methods; but it is important to understand that only a certain slice of experience can be investigated at one time, and that each method has specific premises and limitations. Much confusion could be avoided if it were understood that the cultural milieu provides in part for the *manifest* details of personality (and dreams), via the ego, and

that manifest differences between cultures need not contradict the similarity of basic unconscious processes. In brief, food, sex, sleep, etc. have their *rational* and *cultural* components but also their *irrational* (or infra-rational) and *infra-cultural dynamics*. Conversely, some varieties of rationality and intellectualism may merely be defenses, if not worse (28, 29).

As the "tragic poet" of this century, Freud would have betrayed his own genius if he had merely prescribed a political palliative (e.g., "Dr. Marx's Mixture") or the religio-sociological unction which has become characteristic of Fromm's work. Neither a pessimist nor a fatalist, Freud was, however, a witness to the crisis of western civilization and a woefully sick man for the last twenty years of his life. Probably he felt in himself the tragic ambivalence which he plumbbed in the deepest recesses of the human psyche.

It is easy to find ethical nihilism, fatalism, or license in Freud; it is easy to find them anywhere if one is so disposed. However, none of these terms is applicable to Freud, and no serious student of psychoanalysis is disturbed by them. To the contrary, a case can be made more convincingly for the opposing view: that Freudian theory, properly understood, leads to authentic and rational values, permitting us to bridge the dichotomy between ethical relativity, which is purely descriptive, and those absolutist dogmas which claim universal and supernatural validity (30).

The apologists for Jung and Jaspers, like the masters themselves, are quite correct if they are merely telling us that Freud was not a reassuring reformer, and that he was not a cheer-leader for God and Progress. Taking a tragic view of life, Freud was deeply concerned with those specifically human dilemmas which appear to transcend all vicissitudes and variations of geography, time, race, and socio-cultural condition—e.g., the oedipus complex. It is not relevant to the problems under discussion that many scholars and scientists take issue with Freud's approach to Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex* or to the complex of the same name. Some have made no effort to master the essentials of Freudian

theory; others pursue levels and methods of investigation (diffusionism, interaction theory, etc.) where psychoanalysis is not relevant. Amusingly enough, still others, and apparently on hearsay evidence, reject Freud and Róheim *in toto* but manage to find much solid merit in the achievement of Horney, Sullivan, Kardiner, Fromm, *et al.* (31). Some of these opinions, it may be noted parenthetically, deserve to be classed with the comment of Dean Inge: "I warned my congregation about the abuse of psycho-analysis, which Archdeacon Holmes tells me is doing much harm in London" (32).

At any rate, Freud did not counsel us to take up residence on the dark side of the moon. It is perhaps his greatest contribution that he re-vitalized the meaning of Eros, rescuing it from the monastery (*agapé*), the toy shop, and the brothel. High Greek culture, with the exception of Plato, had localized and personified Eros, making of him (or it) another inane cupid in the vast assemblage of gods. Originally, however, as in the *Theogony* of Hesiod, Eros had been a universal and life-giving power, the first creative force which prevailed over Chaos, creating heaven and earth and fathering the gods and man. This was the Eros of Homer and Hesiod, of Plato and Freud.

In measuring the strength of the irrational and unconscious, Freud has again emphasized the importance of Logos and Eros. The upshot of the entire Freudian psychology is simply that a knowledge of the unconscious will result in a larger degree of control over it: "Where id was, there shall ego be. It is a reclamation work, like the draining of the Zuyder Zee" (33). But it is also a work which, by its very nature, is without end. Nevertheless, Freud's words are remarkably "optimistic" (if one requires such a terminology); they constitute a message of hope—even if a total reclamation of the id is both impossible and undesirable.

University College
Rutgers University
Newark, New Jersey

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